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# Communication Challenges Associated With Voyageurs National Park: A Discourse Analysis

Charlotte Lord Klesman

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COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH VOYAGEURS  
NATIONAL PARK: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

by

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

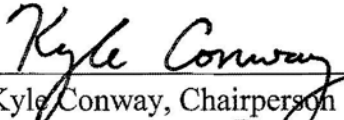
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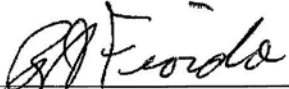
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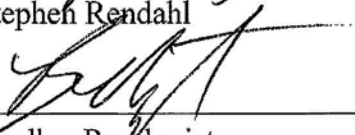
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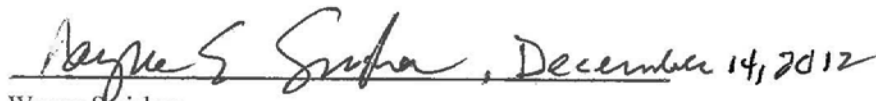
  
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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzed interviews conducted with three key people who described their personal connections to Voyageurs National Park and the adjoining communities. These ethnographic details add insights expressed in the voices of community members who have demonstrated interest in and commitment to the park through their association with the staff and their interactions with the park ecosystems. These insights are valuable because the park mandate requires public involvement in management decisions as part of the public land stewardship but engaging public involvement proved to be complex. After the park was established a rift developed between local community members and those supporting Voyageurs National Park. Research conducted before this dissertation describes the history of political battles surrounding the creation of Voyageurs National Park, the need for wilderness to protect America's national heritage, and the conflict between federal policies used to manage National Parks and Native American issues. This dissertation adds to the body of related research by contributing insights on discourse used to describe the shift away from traditional recreational and subsistence lifestyles in the communities near Voyageurs National Park and the move toward the sustainable, less environmentally invasive uses mandated by the park staff.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examined communication surrounding Voyageurs National Park by analyzing in-depth interviews conducted with three key participants. The participants were chosen based on their personal connections to the natural environment in the park and close ties to the local communities. Discourse analysis was used to analyze their transcribed interviews. Resulting data was categorized to reveal the kinds of communication community members and National Park staff used to describe the ecosystems in the park, their personal connections to the park, and their descriptions of language used to negotiate access to the park's natural resources. Two primary social groups were identified; community members who lost recreational opportunities and access to natural resources after the park was established, and those who support establishment of Voyageurs National Park as the best means to preserve the natural ecosystems there. Members of each group described different beliefs and activities regarding their relationships with natural resources, creating barriers to effective communication. These social differences were identified as the most important barrier to effective communication.

This dissertation is relevant to the International Falls community and Voyageurs National Park staff. The park staff is required to engage the public in management decisions so communication with visitors and local community members is an important

aspect of their land stewardship. Local community members became involved when the federal government acquired state, federal, and local land to establish Voyageurs National Park. In the process the community lost traditional access to natural resources and recreational activities. These events created barriers to effective communication, particularly discussion regarding control of natural resources and recreational opportunities in the park.

In-depth interviews were used for data collection so participants would have a forum in which to describe communication issues they felt were important, rather than directing the research toward specific issues. Interview questions focused on communication connected to the kinds of resources the participants' valued, how they communicated their attachments to these resources, and how they felt the resources should be managed.

This qualitative study asks one central question and three sub questions:

- Central Question: How do research participants interested in the natural ecosystems in and surrounding Voyageurs National Park describe stewardship of the land to others in their community, particularly those from different backgrounds?
- Subquestion: How do research participants negotiate management of shared natural resources?
- Subquestion: How do the participants define the terms “environmental ethics” and “stewardship?”
- Subquestion: How do participants place value on their experiences in the wilderness?



## Research Relevance

This discourse examined the ways people use communication to define, act on, and create concepts of stewardship and environmental ethics related to Voyageurs National Park. It identified radical differences regarding land use and concepts of stewardship were instrumental in creating a barrier to communication between community members and people who supported the park. Park supporters wanted to include the area as a national park for Minnesota but at the time land ownership was a mix of private and public holdings, and local community members had grown used to unrestricted access to the area during the previous fifty years (Witzig, 2004, p. x). They were “stunned at the prospect of losing these advantages” (Witzig, 2004, p. xi). Communication barriers persisted to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Voyageurs National Park managers reported their attempts to work with local community groups were not as effective as they would like (Voyageurs National Park Final General Management Plan, Vol. 1, August, 2001). These results indicated communication barriers persisted after the circumstances creating them, the acquisition of land for the park, was complete and therefore should not be significant.

Concepts surrounding land usage and control of resources were central to the communication barriers. Analysis provided specific insights into 1) the ways people understand stewardship of the land, 2) the ways people would choose to allocate access to resources in the park and the communication tools they use to shape the discussion, 3) social links the participants have with the land in and around the park as manifest in their discussion of concepts of “environmental ethics” and “stewardship,” and 4) the value

participants place on their wilderness experiences, why they consider these experiences valuable, and what elements seem to create this sense of worth for individuals.

Voyageurs National Park was selected as the location for this dissertation because 1) the land used to create the park was taken from other individuals and organizations through acquisition and redesignated as public land, creating multiple opportunities to observe discussions about land stewardship, 2) social concepts of land stewardship related to the area designated as Voyageurs National Park and surrounding areas shifted from the concept that natural resources were available to anyone, to increased scarcity encouraging individuals and organizations to claim sole rights to specific areas, and 3) stewardship practices in the park changed in response to research conducted in the area by researchers and scientists connected with Voyageurs National Park and the National Park Service which impacted how people defined the terms “environmental ethics” and “stewardship.”

One important issue is the absence of effective communication between the Voyageurs National Park management and local community members (Voyageurs National Park Final General Management Plan, Vol. 1, August, 2001). The park staff is legally required to work with the local community to establish appropriate stewardship of the park’s resources. They were tasked to serve the community while protecting the geological features, preserving the history of the region, and protecting the scenic beauty of the area (Voyageurs National Park, 2011).

The park management is required to work with local community members and visitors to create appropriate access to the area while protecting the history, geology, and scenery of the area for future generations but there have been conflicts surrounding the

ways natural resources in the park should be used. This dissertation identified three general groups based on their relationships with the park. These were the Voyageurs National Park staff, their families and affiliates, community members, and visitors to the area. This dissertation concentrated on communication between the park staff and local community members because they have an established history of shared usage and exhibited the strongest conflicts. These conflicts are based on the history of the area, particularly the social climate of the community at the time the park was established and the manner in which the park was created.

Voyageurs National Park was established in 1975 despite local opposition. This early resistance seems to have impacted communication between local communities and the park managers. Some of the land included in the park was originally in state and private hands. Ojibwe Indian sites were also inside the park, including private homesteads, burial grounds, and other significant sites (Voyageurs National Park Final General Management Plan, Vol. 1, 2011). This loss of control and easy access to the land and the related natural resources impacted many people when the park was created and continued to influence how people with ties to the park and related ecosystems interact with, discuss, and describe their relationships with the area.

### Research Participants

Data for this dissertation were drawn from interviews with three key participants. Each participant was interviewed three times. Interview questions were drawn from the research question and the three subquestions, and were designed to be open ended so participants would be comfortable constructing what they felt were appropriate answers. Participants were selected based on their ties to the local communities and to Voyageurs

National Park. Each demonstrated personal ties to the area and above-average interest in the park and the natural environment. Completed interviews were coded and the data organized in data charts, so the results could be easily reviewed and the responses could be compared.

This dissertation was developed to allow insights on the ways people connected to ecosystems in Voyageurs National Park described the value they placed on their experiences there and how they created narratives about their experiences. The results demonstrated the strong attachments people develop with particular natural places, how different aspects of nature influenced the participants, and how the societies in which the participants lived influenced the ways their attachments were created and expressed. Participant narratives also described close interconnection between the ways individuals related to wilderness in the park and the social group with which they were connected. The three primary social groups for this study were the ones related to Voyageurs National Park affiliates, local community members, and visitors to the park who live outside the immediate area. This dissertation focused on the first two social groups. Group identity interacted with the personal interests' participants expressed and influenced the types of wilderness activities participants described.

Participants expressed their emotional connections to Voyageurs National Park and gave examples of events they felt illustrated their descriptions. They assigned value to the park and these experiences based on personal satisfaction they experienced and from feeling they were “giving back” to their friends, social group, country, or other entity besides themselves by contributing to the park. Each expressed different types of personal attachment and attributed different sorts of value to the park. These attachments

included social ties between people interested in stewardship of the park, between people and the natural resources in the park, and interest in studying the biology there.

Participants also expressed appreciation for the recreational opportunities they experienced in the park and interest in the research park employees conducted. They expressed different interests and ties, but each described deep dedication to the natural places in the park. They shared meaningful personal experiences related to the park and described actions they have taken to support it.

*First Participant: Mainville*

The first participant, Ida Mainville, is an Ojibwe who described herself as following her traditional teachings during the interviews. She was chosen to participate because she volunteers with and works for Voyageurs National Park, and because she is an Ojibwe with strong ties to the Native community in the area. Her insights offer another social perspective on communication used to describe the park resources. The social influences she experienced shaped her narratives about her understanding of Voyageurs National Park and other natural places in the Rainy River drainage basin, which includes the park. She described closer, more comprehensive immersion in the natural environment in which she lived than the other two participants. She described the natural world as part of the community and the family in which she lived. She indicated she depended on the natural community for her social needs, as a baseline for the ways she used to identify herself as an Ojibwe woman. She expressed her gratitude for the gifts of nature, both the resources she gathered and the experiences she gained through her associations with natural places.

### *Second Participant: Grim*

The second participant, Leland Grim, was a local high school biology teacher and researcher for Voyageurs National Park. He was asked to participate because he is a research scientist working for the park and he loves to be outdoors, particularly in the park. His narrative added information about the dialogue park researchers use to discuss their work and to share results with others. He described his lifelong fascination with the way nature functions and his pleasure in outdoor recreation. He particularly enjoyed birding, fishing, and sharing his knowledge of the park with others. His social influences included early exposure to outdoor recreation in wild places and appreciation for research and education. He attributed the last two tendencies to his parents. His narrative described his fascination with the ways nature functions and his dedication to protecting natural places like Voyageurs National Park. He also described his work as a mediator, involved with creating regulations based on the needs of a particular ecosystem in the park, and the needs and values of local community members. The communication he described ranged from interpersonal to communication between groups. Communication was expressed through spoken and written language, including interpersonal, formal meetings, and legislation. His narrative included a wide range of communication styles he used to express issues related to the environmental management of Voyageurs National Park and surrounding areas.

### *Third Participant: Cole*

Gladys Cole was the third participant in this dissertation. Cole was asked to participate because she was married to one of the first rangers hired by Voyageurs National Park and because she worked for and volunteered at the park consistently for many years. Unlike

the other two participants, Cole said she was not particularly interested in outdoor recreation or even in environmental issues. She said she liked the people who worked for the National Park System and she supported their missions because she enjoyed associating with them. Her social influences included her parents, the children of emigrants, who appreciated education and valued immediate family members. Her marriage to a National Park employee allowed her to become a member of what she described as the “park family,” a close-knit group of professionals and their families who valued their work with the National Park Service. Her narratives also described deep, personal relationships she deliberately established with others in the community near Voyageurs National Park where she lived. Her contributions to this dissertation are particularly interesting because they indicate how a person can form attachments to a place or a cause based on the endorsements of significant others. Cole said she was interested in the people who cared about Voyageurs National Park and the environment, and she liked to work with these people, so she supported their cause.

### *Department of the Interior*

The U.S. Department of the Interior’s mission is to protect America’s natural resources and heritage, honor American cultures and tribal communities, and to supply enough energy to satisfy future needs by managing the nation’s extensive natural and cultural resources (United States Department of the Interior). Employees include scientists and resource-management experts in nine technical bureaus, including the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Departments deliver services through various department’s land and community based programs designed to

encourage local participation. Departments also raise money through energy, mineral, grazing, and timber leases, recreational permits and land sales.

The organizational structure of the Department of the Interior gives perspective on the position researchers hold in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service. (See Appendix A) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employs 70,000 people and the National Park Service employs more than 20,000 people.<sup>1</sup> Department officials rely on researchers and resource management professionals to supply accurate information and expertise they need to make decisions about how they can best meet their mission; to protect American natural resources and heritage, honor cultures and tribal communities, and supply reliable energy.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Brief History of Voyageurs National Park*

It is important to know the history of the area to understand the causes for the current conflicts between Voyageurs National Park management and the local community. A brief description of the legislative history of Voyageurs National Park is included. (See Appendix B) Voyageurs National Park was a political inevitability created under controversial circumstances. Public and political pressure of the times combined to assure the park would be established but it required negotiation and compromise to pass legislation that met most of the required criteria. As a result all the parties involved had to compromise. Fred Witzig (2004, p. 245-50) developed a timeline of important legislative action connected to creation of Voyageurs National Park, outlining events from 1891 when the Minnesota State Legislature passed a concurrent resolution asking the president of the United States to establish a national park between Crane Lake and Lake of the

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<sup>1</sup> Basic information about the U. S. Department of the Interior is posted on their web page at [www.doi.gov](http://www.doi.gov).

<sup>2</sup> This information is posted on the U.S. Department of the Interior web page at [www.doi.gov](http://www.doi.gov).



Woods until November 11, 2001 when the “Voyageurs National Park General Management/Environmental Impact Statement/Visitor Use and Facilities Plan” became law. The timeline shows how different groups entered the discussion and interacted to create legal guidelines for the stewardship used to manage the park.

The most important time period for this dissertation research falls between July 19, 1968, when Minnesota’s Eighth district Congressman John Blatnik introduced his first Voyageurs National Park bill, and April 8, 1975 when the park was formally established. This time period highlights discussions about the ways the land which became Voyageurs National Park would be managed and by whom. Animosity developed between people supporting the creation of Voyageurs National Park and the people who opposed it, often because their personal property or livelihoods were at risk. State legislators were caught between local objections and statewide support for the park.

Despite vocal local opposition, Blatnik wanted to initiate his version of the proposed legislation before his colleagues could present their own so he introduced his first Voyageurs bill on July 19, 1968 (Witzig, 2004). While the bill was unpopular with his constituents, Blatnik was certain statewide support would ensure eventual passage. Blatnik’s legislation included provisions he called “safeguards” to protect local people from “any adverse effects” the new park might create (Witzig, 2000, p. 116). They included provisions for hunting, trapping, and commercial fishing, even though National Park Service Director Hartzog stated during the two-day Subcommittee hearings on the proposal for Voyageurs National Park that there would need to be “substantive amendments” to the Blatnik bill to make it consistent with National Park Service policy

for national parks (Witzig, 2000, pp. 115 – 6). If the amendments were passed the park could not be part of the National Park system.

While Blatnik was convinced the park was a legislative certainty, attaching his name to the bill was still politically risky. The International Falls Daily Journal, which was not a big park supporter, recognized his courageous action. An editorial (16, July 1968) read, “Excluding declarations of war, perhaps no issue has ever exerted more pressures on a congressman than those on Eighth District Congressman Blatnik during the past four years of the Voyageurs National Park controversy. It must be said, to Blatnik’s credit, that he held off introduction of the bill as long as he possibly could to allow study and a consensus within his district.” The congressman’s dilemma illustrates the divisions Grim and Cole describe. Some community members, like Grim, welcomed the park but many supporters were outside the local community. The Park Service also antagonized supporters by failing to keep them informed, but the greatest failure to communicate came at the public hearings.

The National Park Service announced public hearings on the Voyageurs National Park proposal would be held in early September, 1964, in International Falls, Duluth, and Minneapolis. Copies of the anticipated report on the park were distributed to the estimated eight hundred plus attendees at the International Falls meeting. This was the first time most of them had seen anything official about the park. The audience was not happy when NPS Director Hartzog announced the report was only preliminary. People wanted facts so they would know how to respond and how to best develop their future decisions regarding their property and activities in the proposed park area.

John Kawanoto from the National Park Service regional office explained the proposal to the crowd. Looking back, he said the park service should have offered the report earlier because many of the speakers at the meeting were using faulty information they got from those opposing the park (Witzig, 2004, p. 51). Some readers had issues with the content. The editor of the International Falls Daily Journal, (23 September 1964) who read an early copy of the report, said it was “as vital for what it does not say as for what it does say” and observed the report was long on description but short on facts. There was little information about private holdings in the park, how private lands would be acquired, the impact of lost tax base to the local community, how wildlife would be managed, or other important issues. He warned readers, “If after Saturday’s public meeting, there is the least shadow of doubt about Park Service plans and intentions, and if we cannot be assured that this is not a federal land grab or a veiled attempt to extend the so-called wilderness area, then, the Journal sincerely believes we should vigorously oppose the proposed National Park.” Most people, both for and against the park, left the International Falls meeting feeling confused and upset. (Witzig, 2004, p. 50-1)

Witzig (2004, p. 43) identifies poor communication between National Park employees and the public, particularly their supporters, as a contributing factor to local resistance. Park supporters did not realize how complicated the legislative process could be and park employees did not tell them why there was a delay finishing the report and scheduling public hearings (Witzig, 2004, p. 43). Months passed. The park service missed an opportunity to build local support in the early stages and while this event did not doom all future negotiations it did set a pattern in which the park employees did not reach out to the public in a consistent, reliable way (Witzig, 2004, p. 43-4).

Despite local objections, plans to transfer land to federal control and create Voyageurs National Park continued to move forward. In June 1971 Myrl Brooks was selected as the project manager based on his managerial experience. His task was to reach out to local residents to inform them about the new regulations coming to the area and hopefully gain support for the park. Interviewed in Washington, D.C. by the *International Falls Daily Journal* (23 September 1964) before leaving for his new post, Brooks said, “Our endeavor there will be to be a good neighbor.” This statement indicates the Voyageurs National Park management did try to connect with the local community.

Voyageurs National Park was formally established on April 8, 1975, and the discussion about the park shifted accordingly. Today the Voyageurs National Park General Management Plan, Vol. 1 & 2 (August 2001) includes opportunities for public comment, a system in which those comments are considered, and the results are included in implementing the general management plan. All are encouraged to participate but Cole stated in her narrative that participation has been much lower than the park staff wanted.

#### *Voyageurs National Park Policy*

Poor communication with local people was an issue for Voyageurs National Park so a brief review is provided below. National Park policy regarding public comment follows government guidelines that prevent flexible, on-the-spot responses to developing situations. Policy statements can also be time-consuming to access, read, and understand, and proposing changes to the rules is a lengthy process for community residents.

Voyageurs National Park published an updated proposed general management plan, the Voyageurs National Park Final General Management Plan, Vol. 1 & 2, in August, 2001. The plan states the scope of the environmental impact and what impact

topics were reviewed for consideration. This document is an example of the way the National Park personnel carry out their duties as stewards of public lands.<sup>3</sup> The planning process began with soliciting comments from the public, agencies and interests groups. These meetings, called “scopings,” were used to focus on issues facing the park and to share visions for the park’s future. The findings were used in conjunction with issues developed by the planning team and used to develop the four proposed alternative actions. Most of the public comments indicated people liked the way the park was managed and they did not feel major changes were necessary.

The Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement provides an example of the way Park Service employees met important obligations to the public. The management plan and the process used to arrive at the final version are transparent. Documents were available for public scrutiny and the public was given opportunities to participate in open meetings.<sup>4</sup> Research was used to measure the environmental impact of past, present, and proposed management decisions, and the results were presented in the report. The wording used for the reports was clear and easy to understand. Supporting data were presented in appropriate graphs and charts. The basis for the final decision was clearly stated so the public could understand the reasoning behind management decisions. Concerns expressed by other agencies and public lands with connections to Voyageurs National Park were discussed and the shared implications reviewed. At the end of the process, legislation was passed to support the new proposal.

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<sup>3</sup> From United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, Record of Decision; Final Environmental Impact Statement General Management Plan and Visitor Use and Facilities Plan. Voyageurs National Park, MN.

<sup>4</sup> Public involvement was solicited in August 1998 through announcements in the Federal Register and newsletters. Public meetings were held in August, 1998, in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Orr, and International Falls. Written comments were also accepted. Comments were summarized in a press release in December 1998.

The final, two-volume Management Plan is bulky, the process was long and complicated, many people were involved, and from the public's perspective the results were not very different from the original management plan, but the system developed in response to the needs dictated through interactions between the Voyageurs National Park public stewards and the people they serve. The system attempted to build checks and balances through transparency, creating opportunities for the park service and the public to share knowledge, goals, concerns, and other issues related to shared ownership of this public land. Requests for public comment encouraged the public to take ownership of the park through public involvement. The public would be more likely to respect park property and resources when they feel it belongs to them. They might also support issues related to the park by soliciting their politicians in favor of related legislation. As Grim said, "If you want to get something done you've gotta apply the [political] pressure in the places that really matter" (Interview July 26, 2010).

The Voyageurs National Park Final General Management Plan (2001) mandates public involvement in management decisions but switching policy development from command-and-control regulation directed from the top down, to shared ownership in the decision-making process, has been challenging. Despite the energy and effort invested at the federal and state level, public participation in Voyageurs National Park management has decreased considerably since the initial public hearings were held in International Falls, Duluth, and Minneapolis in September, 1964.<sup>5</sup> At that time people were concerned about their property and proposed regulations curtailing their activities in the proposed park. Koontz et al. (2004, p. 19) said there must be collaboration between or among

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<sup>5</sup> The International Falls Daily Journal reporter attending the event estimated more than 800 people attended the International Falls meeting. Published 22 September 1964.

stakeholders so everyone involved can share different points of view and generate information they need to address growing, complex environmental problems. In this instance local community members were upset by the lack of available information. A report on the park was supposed to be available before the public comment meetings but copies were not distributed until the International Falls meeting and the report was preliminary (Witzig, 2004, p. 51).

Despite local objections, plans to transfer land to federal control and create Voyageurs National Park continued to move forward. In June 1971 Myrl Brooks was selected as the project manager. His task was to reach out to local residents to inform them about the new regulations coming to the area and hopefully gain support for the park. Interviewed in Washington, D.C. by the *International Falls Daily Journal* (23 September 1964) before leaving for his new post, Brooks said, “Our endeavor there will be to be a good neighbor” (McConagha, 20 June, 1971).

The discussion about the park shifted once Voyageurs National Park was formally established. Increasing demands on natural resources triggered different responses from participants. Scientific and technical knowledge has become increasingly important in political debates about the environment (Pierce & Lovrich, 1986, p. 4). Grim described citizen groups formed to protect the environment while others were against sustainable practices. He called the discussion a “tug-of-war” between the two interest groups (Interview July 19, 2010).

This review illustrates the shift from little communication between the National Park Service and the public when Voyageurs National Park was formed, to Brooks and subsequent Voyageurs National Park managers who were tasked to reach out and

establish good relations with local community members. Today the Voyageurs National Park General Management Plan (August 2001) includes opportunities for public comment, a system in which those comments are considered, and the results are included in implementing the general management plan. However, the report states Voyageurs Park Service managers have been frustrated in their attempts to involve local participants.

Lack of community involvement could indicate overall satisfaction with management decisions. Focus on primary environmental interest groups draws attention away from the majority of citizens who are happy to leave policy matters in the hands of the experts unless it affects them directly (Pierce & Lovrich, 1986, p. 6). People who do want to be involved find they need to collect and interpret technical information they are not prepared to face. They can feel alienated, confused, concerned, and distrustful of the government agencies creating policy and the scientific community creating the information. These circumstances do not encourage participation or effective dialogue (Pierce & Lovrich, 1986).

It is plausible Voyageurs National Park management satisfies local environmental concerns. A study conducted by Kempton, Boster, and Hartley (1995, p. 211) found most Americans share common environmental beliefs and values. Environmentalism has become an integral part of core American values, particularly in relation to parental responsibilities, obligation to future generations, traditional religious teachings, and biocentric values (Kempton, Boster, & Hartley, 1995, p. 214-5). People use these values and the cultural models based on these values when they decide which environmental policies to support.<sup>6</sup> Values held by lay persons (people without scientific training) were

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<sup>6</sup> This study looked for patterns of variation within cultural models . Researchers identified target groups and used a survey and semi-structured interviews to ask participants about global warming.



based on cultural ideas, or models, about how nature works and how people interact with it (Kempton, Boster, & Hartley, 1995, p. 115). They found many different cultural models and values influence American environmental beliefs, not one or two group of activists (Kempton, Boster, & Hartley, 1995, p. 217). Today most Americans do not look for scientific information about environmental issues but they seem to base their environmental beliefs on the most widely publicized, recent environmental problems (p. 219). Voyageurs National Park interpreters have followed this pattern by encouraging park visitors to form personal attachments and practice good stewardship habits consistent with their environmental beliefs.

#### Related Research

This dissertation addresses the gaps in existing literature on the ways people describe stewardship, environmental ethics, and their personal connections with ecosystems in public space in their community. This detailed analysis of extensive participant narratives builds on similar research. The results add insights into the social influences the participants describe, and by connecting descriptions of participants' actions with narratives about the circumstances and their reasoning in connection with those actions. The results offer a detailed examination of issues related to the communication existing between three main social groups who were found to have close connections with Voyageurs National Park; the park staff, the local community residents, and park visitors.

A great deal has been written about the biota in Voyageurs National Park, the legal history related to establishing the park, and the history of the area, but little has been written about the communication used to describe stewardship and land use. Ernest

Oberholtzer, a founding member of the Wilderness Society in 1935, which supported creation of the park, wrote articles, letters, and legislation describing the area and the recreational opportunities there before the park was established. His writings emphasized managing the natural resources for sustainable use through controlled commercial enterprises such as fishing and logging, and recreational opportunities (Searle, 1977, p. 65). R. Newell Searle's book, "Saving Quentico-Superior: A Land Set Apart" (1977) provides a detailed history of the preservation of the Quentico-Superior area, which includes Voyageurs National Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Past Voyageurs National Park director, Fred Witzig, (2000, 2004) wrote about the history of the legislation used to create the park. These works offer detailed accounts of the people and legislation used to create Voyageurs National Park and other preserves in the Quentico-Superior ecosystems but none focus on narrative analysis.

The Ojibwe connections to the land in Voyageurs National Park add another dimension to definitions of stewardship and environmental ethics. As an Ojibwe, Mainville's descriptions of her relationship with the biota on and near the park added another dimension to definitions of stewardship and environmental ethics. Callicott and Nelson (2000) collected traditional Ojibwe narratives and analyzed them to determine an Ojibwe world view and environmental ethic. They describe the Ojibwe land ethic based on essential spirit-essence, with little separation between human beings and other-than-human beings. All beings are mutually dependent but human beings are more dependent than other-than-humans (2004, p. 128-9). Mainville's narratives apply their findings, which are drawn from traditional stories, to modern social concepts in a specific place.

There has been new research on Native Americans and the Ojibwe. Lisa P. Valentine's excellent book, "Making it Their Own" (1995) explores the language and discourse of the Anihshiniwak, an Algonquian people of northwestern Ontario, who speak a variety of Ojibwe in their Lynx Lake community. Her work provides insights on the ways the Ojibwe have adapted to and integrated elements of modern ideas and technology into their lives, but the focus is on language use rather than local relationships with the natural resources.

Keller and Turek (1998) researched the history and more recent relations between the National Park Service and Native American tribes with historic and current ties to National Parks. Their work describes the evolving relationships between specific National Parks and related Native American tribes ( p. 233). They point out the inherent conflict between the immediate interests and explicit rights of the tribes while the Park Service is mandated to serve everyone (p. 237). They also discuss the battle between the Chippewa Indians (also called the Ojibwe) and the National Park Service over the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, which was transferred from the Chippewa Reservation land to National Park Service control (1998, pp. 7-16) but they do not specifically mention the Ojibwe in Voyageurs National Park.

Stapp and Burney (2002, p. 2) also describe cultural resource management by American Indians, who consider their natural environment to be an important cultural and spiritual resource. Since the Reagan-Bush administration recognized the relationship between Indian tribes and the federal government as a government-to-government relationship, Indian tribes have worked hard to move toward self-government and self-determination (Strapp and Burney, 2002, p. 123). Consultation is an important part of

tribal cultural resource management and recognition of tribal governments as sovereign changed the balance of power between Native stewards and federal agencies. Strapp and Burney (2002, p. 119) describe consultation between the tribe and others who want to be part of the decision-making process. The key ingredient to success is sincerity. If the agency or project manager truly wants to know what the Indians think about a project or issue it is more likely to succeed.

Protecting cultural resources is an important part of the process. Cultural resources usually include archeological sites, areas described in oral traditions, and areas where traditional resources such as food and medicine are gathered. Strapp and Burney (2002, p. 5) describe this type of management as stewardship, including protection for natural resources such as water, salmon, and plants in a way that narrows the gap between cultural and natural resource management. Cultural resource management includes access to resources, not just preservation. Access can extend to descendant communities and the general public who may want to visit sites to learn about them (Strapp and Burney, 2002, p. 6). Native American cultures need sustainable resources to survive, so the people are motivated to protect them. Keller and Turek (1998) also address Native American access to resources in an overview of National Park relations with Native American groups.

Awareness of history and a commitment to discussion will not necessarily change policy in a national advocacy organization, but honest dialogue can help idealist' realize that protecting land is no simple matter. Moving beyond "us versus them" raises dilemmas, especially when the land saved is for recreation at the expense of people living in poverty. (Keller & Turek, 1998, p. 239)

American Indians have been used as symbols of the ways people in each particular time in American history should interact with nature. Shepard Krech III (1991, p. 27) and Deloria (1998) refute the stereotype of the “Noble Savage” and the “Ignoble Savage,” or the images early European settlers and their descendents generally ascribe to North American Indians. Krech argues this symbolic link between Indians and nature conservation still exists for most Americans, with narrative changes based on the times in which the images were created (Krech, 1991, p. 26; Bruner & Turner, 1986, p. 135) but these outside cultural influences distort the ways Native Americans view themselves and therefore the actions the images supposedly explain.

This dissertation examined the ways key participants described their interest in natural places in and near Voyageurs National Park and the ways these people define the terms “stewardship” and “environmental ethics,” but it did not specify why the participants would feel drawn to these natural places. The wording of the research questions attempted to eliminate limits on the ways people would assign value to the relatively wild ecosystems in and surrounding the park. Often environmental ethicists and researchers assign value based in direct, personal interest because this is usually the motivating factor people need to take notice and as a consequence take action. Ethical environmental arguments tend to focus on personal interest and ethical, moral considerations or doing what is right rather than examining how discussion and language were used to develop and test these concepts.

Historically the legal and social disputes surrounding Voyageurs National Park were generally created in response to people who felt direct, personal interest in the

natural places and resources there. These disputes are similar to those in other areas and generated now-classic environmental ethical theories, including the land ethic by Aldo Leopold (1949, p. 201-226) who drew on his personal experiences in Wisconsin, and his professional experiences with the U. S. Forest Service. He described conservation as “a state of harmony between men and land” (p. 207). He argued against equating conservation with economic value (p. 212) and assigning American conservation to government rather than private land owners (p. 213). Instead he proposed “a land ethic, or some other force which assigns more obligation to the private land owner” (p. 213-4) to sustain human health and well-being by supporting the health of the natural health of the lands. The deep ecological movement (Naess, 1984; Sessions, 1995) guidelines stress the intrinsic value of living things and this belief is reflected in biocentrism. Egocentrism adds inanimate natural things such as water bodies and geological formations to the list of natural things deserving consideration (Sessions, 1995).

Ethical arguments for interacting with the environment based on what is morally right generally focus on questions of sentience and the ability to rationalize. Goodpaster expands on Leopold’s work by arguing for an ethic centered on anthropocentric ethics, or ethical theories that view or interpret issues in terms of human experiences and values, and ethics based on sentience or the argument that all living things have needs and interests (Goodpaster & Sayre, 1978).

#### Adding to the Existing Research

Available resources offer broad overviews of environmental issues related to National Parks, local communities, and Native American tribes but research related to communication used to establish relationships between these groups has not been well

researched. Voyageurs National Park superintendents have tried to develop rapport with the local community by encouraging joint participation in management policy but reports indicate there is still animosity toward the park in the local community. No one has interviewed key participants specifically regarding their relationship with the environment in and around the park or asked about how they define the terms stewardship and environmental ethics in relation to the park. During the late 1970s Voyageurs National Park employee Mary Pearson recorded oral histories from people who lived in the area during the late 1970s<sup>7</sup> and she appears to be the last Voyageurs National Park employee to consistently document local history.

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<sup>7</sup> At least three of Pearson's oral history interviews were produced by Voyageurs National Park, from July 1976 to June 1979. Information available at [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/voya/legislative\\_history/bibliography.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/voya/legislative_history/bibliography.htm)

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### Choosing Key Participants

The method of research for this dissertation included in-depth interviews with key participants so researchers can better understand the lived experience of people in the Voyageurs National Park communities and the meaning they made of their experiences. Seven participants were identified and interviewed. Of the seven, three participants were selected for this dissertation based on their involvement with Voyageurs National Park, their connections to the local communities bordering the park, and their interest in environmental issues. They were Ida Mainville, Leland Grim, and Gladys Cole. These participants spoke from personal experiences in different social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds, and they narrated different types of relationships with the park.

The remaining four participants were eliminated because two had close ties with the local community and the Ojibwe community but did not have close ties with Voyageurs National Park, and the other two described similar experiences to those reported by Leland Grim, who was selected as a final participant. Grim was chosen because he actively pursued association with Voyageurs National Park at the first public meeting in International Falls, he was one of the first local community members hired by the park, and he has maintained the longest continuous association with the park. The other two participants, Ida Mainville and Gladys Cole, were selected based on their



community ties, their close relationship with the Voyageurs National Park staff, and their demonstrated support for the park through their service.

This dissertation focused on personal relationships, and individual concepts related to events in a specific time frame and location. The participants were selected because they were involved in some way with key events surrounding Voyageurs National Park so the best means of inquiry was to ask them to share their experiences. As Bertaux (1981) said, subjects of social inquiry in the social sciences can talk and think for themselves, and “[i]f given a chance to talk freely, people appear to know a lot about what is going on” (p. 39). Understanding the ways people make meaning of their experiences influences the way they carry out that experience (Seidman, 2006, p. 10; Blumer, 1969, p. 2). The interview process allowed participants to share the stories behind their activities and have an opportunity to go through the meaning making process, or the mental processes they used to resolve conflicts, pass judgment, and otherwise establish meaning in particular context, with the researcher.

Ida Mainville was asked to participate based on her involvement as a volunteer and seasonal worker at Voyageurs National Park. She was also selected based on her cultural connections to the community. The area included in the park was once part of the Ojibwe tribe’s traditional homeland and Mainville is an Ojibwe Indian. An honored elder, Mainville was raised in a traditional Ojibwe family on a Canadian reserve. During the interviews she described close ties to the natural environment based on what she said were her traditional Ojibwe teachings, passed to her by her father. Mainville was also the only self-identified Ojibwe Indian who sought out and maintained connections to the staff and ecosystems in Voyageurs National Park. She supported the park as a volunteer and

seasonal employee. She told park visitors about the traditional lifestyle she experienced while growing up and she attributed the close ties she feels to the natural environment with her traditional teachings. Her actions demonstrated her interest in the local, natural ecosystems and sharing her cultural experiences with others. She also described supporting her children and grandchildren when they expressed interest in their Ojibwe teachings and related connections to their traditional lands.

Despite her close involvement with Voyageurs National Park and her strong interest in environmental preservation in her community Mainville did not describe herself as politically active, although she did talk about political activism of other Ojibwe women who were protesting pollution of Lake Superior. When asked why she did not participate in organizations or public meetings regarding management of Voyageurs National Park, she said the park area was not her traditional homeland. She came to Voyageurs National Park because tribal leaders managing her reserve in Canada were developing the land where she grew up. She came to the park to experience the type of natural surroundings she remembered as a child.

While Mainville did not identify direct, traditional ties between herself and the Voyageurs National Park ecosystems, she did develop personal connections as an adult, allowing her to participate in this dissertation as a key participant. She came to the park to experience a personal connection with the natural environment and contributed to the maintenance of the park through service as an employee and volunteer. Also, it was important to include a traditional Ojibwe voice in this dissertation. When Voyageurs National Park was proposed local tribal members do not appear to have been represented when public comments were solicited or when the park legislation was signed in 1975.

Early National Park authorities considered Native American Indians to be a curiosity, the remains of the land's ancient past with no distinct personalities or political power (Keller & Turek, 1998, p. 232). Today the National Park Service is committed to cross-cultural communication and cooperation with Native American Indian tribes but when Voyageurs National Park was created public comment periods satisfied the Park Service mandate for community participation. The report published by Fred Witzig (2000) indicates there were no spokespersons for the Ojibwe Indians or Métis during the public discussion periods. In this dissertation Mainville represented a member of a society previously excluded from discussions concerning Voyageurs National Park.

Leland (Lee) Grim was asked to participate to provide perspective of someone who has worked with Voyageurs National Park and lived in the local community since 1967, shortly after the legislative debate proposing the park began in 1962. Grim described his fascination with natural biology, particularly ornithology, the study of birds, and how his scientific interest connected him to the park. A part-time employee, research biologist, and retired high school biology teacher, Grim said he was attracted to the natural ecosystems and the professional opportunities in the International Falls, Minnesota area. Grim taught high school biology and worked as a summer seasonal employee at the park. When he retired from teaching he continued to work part time with the park. He expressed close ties to people in the community through personal relationships and said he was deeply committed to his work at Voyageurs National Park.

Grim provided an informative juxtaposition between the traditional environmental uses attributed to local community members and those supported by Voyageurs National Park staff. Grim's statements demonstrate his strong support for legislation designed to

protect natural areas but he also expressed empathy and sympathy for local community members who were losing traditional access to natural resources and recreational opportunities. His ability to perceive, understand, and empathize with the perspective of others in the International Falls community allowed data collected from his interviews to act as a conceptual bridge between the traditional cultural practices, which were beginning to fade, and the environmentally sustainable practices imposed by Voyageurs National Park, other organizations interested in sustaining natural resources and environments, and the shift from tourists interested in hunting and fishing to park visitors interested in environmentally-friendly types of outdoor recreation.

Gladys Cole was asked to participate because she was married to an original Voyageurs National Park employee and has been a dedicated National Park Service volunteer for most of her adult life. Cole moved with her family to Kabetogama Township when her husband, Glen, accepted a position at the newly created park. She described developing personal relationships with her neighbors and her husband's coworkers which allowed her access to two primary social groups with connections to the park. Her perspective created a viewpoint from which to observe interactions within and between the local community members and those affiliated with Voyageurs National Park, which are the primary cultural groups identified in this dissertation. Her association with both groups shaped her world view which is reflected in the narrative recorded during the interview process.

Cole stated she was motivated to support the work of the National Park Service and Voyageurs National Park because she liked associating with the people affiliated with these organizations. She describes participating in outdoor activities with others and

working with them to support their projects but her involvement is motivated by her attachment to the people. She does not appear to be drawn to the activity. Her descriptions of her activities and personal motivation are particularly relevant for nonprofits or other agencies dependent on volunteer support. The findings indicate individual motivation to support a cause can be based on interpersonal attachments, in addition to or rather than interest in the mission of the organization.

### Interview Questions

Data were collected by interviewing the participants three times and transcribing their narratives. Interviews were based on the three-interview model described by Siedman (2006). The model structure is designed to create opportunities to observe circumstances and occurrences through in-depth, one-on-one discussion. Interviews were spaced at least three days apart so participants would have time to think about the previous interview(s) and consider what they might want to share at the next one. The interviews included increasingly analytical questions, or questions designed to encourage the participant to think deeply about their reasoning and motivation. Questions elicited descriptions of behavior participants described by placing actions in context.

Interviews were based on a specific list of questions. (See Appendix C) In the first interview participants were asked to share their personal history up to the present and to use the context of the study (Voyageurs National Park) as a guideline when they chose which narratives to share. In the second interview they were asked to concentrate on specific, concrete details they felt were important to the research topic by placing them in the context of the particular social setting. In the last interview they were asked to think about the meaning of their experience, or the emotional and intellectual connections they

might associate with their narratives. Describing their experiences through language allowed participants to take part in the meaning-making process (Vygotsky, 1987). Participants were encouraged to develop personal meaning-making experiences by selecting particular events from their past and describing how they felt about them. They were encouraged to share these narratives during all of the interviews but the third interview was specifically designed to encourage meaning-making in context with the earlier interviews.

### *Questions for the First Interview*

The first interview was designed to help the participant relax and become accustomed to the interview process. Questions in the first interview documented how each participant was socialized as a child and later as an adult. They were asked to talk about their lives, beginning with where they were born and raised, and to continue up to the present. These personal details allowed the researcher to establish a social identity, or the social circumstances in which each person was born, and early socialization as a child (Fairclough, 2003, p. 223). Participants described how they were further socialized into particular roles as adults based on personal conditions, such as work and family circumstances.

The first interview questions identified relevant personality traits, and how these personal traits might influence the choices and actions participants describe in their narratives. Questions about education, hobbies, and people or events participants felt had a strong influence on them were used to identify similarities and differences in behavior based on circumstances. The interview process was designed to encourage participants to

recall these events so they would consider them later, at the beginning of the third interview.

The questions in the first interview were broad questions to establish the context in which the participants developed narratives in later interviews. The questions were neutral so the participants would be free to answer in ways they felt were relevant. At the end of each interview participants were asked to share relevant information that might have been overlooked. They were challenged to review the discussion and consider what might be relevant or important. This established participants as active contributors and encouraged them to take ownership of the narratives they created in the interview process.

#### *Questions for the Second Interview*

After the first interview the accumulated data were organized and reviewed. Detailed field notes described the location where the interview took place, how each participant responded, what events might influence data collection, and other relevant details. These field notes and the transcribed interviews were reviewed, and the narratives participants shared were evaluated to determine how to proceed with the second interview. Interview questions were reviewed and refined based on earlier responses and insights of the researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998; Creswell, 2003, p. 14). All participants were asked the same types of questions but the questions were open-ended to allow participants to describe their experiences, particularly those based on the terms “stewardship” and “environmental ethics.” Data were continuously reviewed and categorized as it emerged during the interview process so patterns could be identified and data collection methods could adapt accordingly.

In the second interview participants were asked to share their experiences with nature while they were growing up and describe what outdoor activities they participated in at the time of the interviews. Each interview began with a brief review of the final discussions from the first interview. This set the tone for the meeting by encouraging participants to think about these earlier discussions, and to establish a mental image of the social settings and circumstances surrounding their previous narrative before beginning the next set of questions.

This interview focused on participant concepts of social influences and personal predilections by placing each person in relation to his or her social life. Each participant described moving between interrelated social events, practices, and structures in which the narrative was placed, and the perspective of related social action and agency (Fairclough 2003, p. 205 & 223). Data collection was based on narratives about social events and practices, with data evaluated as elements of social events.

Participants were asked if they liked to be outside to avoid the assumption they were drawn to Voyageurs National Park for recreational or educational opportunities. They were asked to share early memories and family activities to see if socialization might have influenced participant behavior as adults, and to allow them to illustrate their statements with personal stories. The narratives provided examples to support their conclusions and created guidelines to interpret actions based on assigned meanings.

One goal for this study was to identify the emotional connections people associate with wilderness areas and how those attachments were first established. Participants were asked to describe any special places, people, or events they connected to natural places, to elicit responses related to emotional connections. They were directed to recall



situations related to the events and to answer based on their perceptions. This tied the narrative of events with the emotional context.

It was important to recognize the ways in which the participants became interested in the environment so their responses could be compared with the national and state trends.

Outdoor activity in America has been on the decline and is projected to continue to fall.

A Minnesota Department of Natural Resources study shows decrease in most outdoor activities across ten year projections from 2004 until 2014.<sup>8</sup> The forecast examined the majority of adult Minnesotans annual outdoor recreation time in 2004, or 83 percent of their total recreation time. Activities considered to be specific to Minnesotans were compared to projections based on U.S. population trends. Minnesota specific activities occupied just over one-third of total recreation time. (See Table 1)

Decreases in participation ranged from 11 percent to 25 percent decline, except offroad ATV driving, which showed an exceptionally large increase. During the ten year period of the study, ATV recreational vehicle registrations nearly doubled every five years. Since ATV driving is not appropriate (or allowed) in Voyageurs National Park, this finding does not apply to this dissertation but the across-the-board decreases in other outdoor activities are significant. The study stipulates that population increases in Minnesota can offset many of the negative participation rate changes and create more stable numbers over the ten year period, so outdoor activity should remain about the same if ATV riding is excluded.

Boating of all types and fishing of all types are the first two listings as Minnesota specific activities. Boating fell from 35.5 percent in 2004 to 31.4 percent projected in 2014. Fishing fell from 30.2 percent in 2004 to 24.7 percent projected in 2014. Since

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<sup>8</sup> An electronic copy is available at [http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/reports/ten\\_year\\_rec\\_forecast.pdf](http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/reports/ten_year_rec_forecast.pdf)

Table 1 Ten-Year Projections of Annual Outdoor Recreation Participation by Minnesotans, 2004 to 2014

Projections Based On Minnesota-Specific Activity Trend Data

Activity	Percent of population participating annually			Number of annual participants (000's)			Number of annual participants (000's)		
	2004	2014	Percent change	2004	2014	Percent change	2004	2014	Percent change
Boating of all types (excludes fishing from boat)	35.5%	31.4%	-11.5%	1,237.3	1,258.9	1.8%	58,099.7	59,118.5	1.8%
Fishing of all types	30.2%	24.7%	-18.4%	1,053.9	988.3	-6.2%	76,239.8	71,497.6	-6.2%
Visiting outdoor zoos	27.5%	20.7%	-24.7%	956.6	828.1	-13.4%	5,822.6	5,040.9	-13.4%
Visiting historic or archeological sites	20.7%	16.2%	-21.6%	721.1	649.8	-9.9%	6,198.6	5,585.5	-9.9%
Viewing, identifying or photographing birds and other wildlife	20.4%	15.9%	-22.0%	711.9	638.5	-10.3%	41,266.8	37,010.1	-10.3%
Hunting all types	16.0%	14.2%	-11.2%	556.0	567.8	2.1%	48,187.7	49,212.3	2.1%
Offroad ATV driving	10.3%	36.1%	251.9%	357.3	1,446.0	304.7%	15,262.4	61,762.0	304.7%
Snowmobiling	9.8%	8.2%	-16.8%	341.8	327.0	-4.3%	10,259.9	9,817.0	-4.3%

Note. This table is taken from Table 6 of the ten-year forecasts of Minnesota adult outdoor recreation participation, 2004 to 2014, developed by the Office of Management and Budget Services, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and written by Kelly, T. (2005). Retrieved from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources web site: [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us).

Voyageurs National Park is a water based park, these activities are directly related.

Voyageurs National Park also has a variety of hiking trails, ranging from wheelchair accessible to challenging trails that take three or four days to cover. Hiking was not listed as Minnesota specific, but was classified under projections based on U.S. trend data. The

survey predicts no change in the 54.4 percent of Americans who list hiking as an outdoor activity. Other findings listed were not relevant to this study.

After participants described their background and recreational preferences they were asked if they had noticed any environmental changes in the area and if so what kinds of changes. Each person was encouraged to share stories and give examples, and to speculate on what might have caused those changes. The questions allowed insights on how participants observed the natural environment they inhabited, how they placed value on the natural resources they used, what sorts of resources they valued, and whether or not the resources were renewable. They were asked if they rely on those resources to fill specific needs to show possible motivation for the participant to focus on particular conditions. They were also asked to compare human incursions into nature with those made by animals or acts of nature, such as beaver dams and naturally occurring wildfires. They were encouraged to use examples to illustrate their statements so the statements could be used to compare participant opinions with related events and actions.

The last set of questions asked participants to talk about their personal relationships with the environment. These questions set the tone for the third interview by encouraging participants to think about their connections to natural environments they care about and reflect on their relationships with those places. They were asked to consider how they value those resources and to compare “natural” environmental changes, or changes caused by animals, weather, or similar events, to changes made by people. The questions moved participants toward the conclusion of the interviews by asking how they felt about the outdoors today, if it was important to them and if so in what ways so they would begin to consider what sorts of personal value, if any, nature

contributes to their lives. The interviews ended by asking participants if there was anything they wanted to add, but they were discouraged from moving beyond the issues in the interview. This way each person had time to think about their relationship with the environment before answering questions in the third interview.

### *Questions for the Third Interview*

Questions for the third interview were based on data collected from previous interviews, particularly the second. During the second interview participants shared increasingly personal narratives so insights from the latest data analysis were used to develop questions for the third interview. The questions were designed to obtain responses from all participants, based on the same criteria, so data between participants could be compared while maintaining connections between data from earlier interviews. Questions were open-ended to allow participants to share unanticipated observations.

The third interview began by asking participants a few of the same questions used to end the second interview. This review reminded participants of earlier discussions and gave them a little time to recall any new thoughts they might have constructed. They were asked to describe what natural places meant to them, and to share where they went and what they did when they were outdoors. Sharing their experiences encouraged participants to remember the events and emotions connected with the experiences they were describing. This established the proper frame of mind to answer the questions.

The third interview was the least scripted and filled several purposes. Each participant was asked to define the terms “stewardship” and “environmental ethics” within the context established through earlier questions to show how they used dialogue to frame and express these ideas. This allowed the data collected from each participant to

emerge from the same kinds of circumstances; each was asked to recall how they placed value on natural places and to describe what they do outdoors before they were asked to define these key terms. Each participant was allowed a few minutes to consider how they might answer the question by first asking them if they had heard the terms before and in what context. Then participants were asked to describe what these terms meant to them. This question helped to establish the social settings and context in which participants heard and used these terms. Next participants were asked to share what the discussion on environmental ethics meant to them. Other interview questions were designed to encourage each participant to develop personal knowledge about the topic by using language to create and share ideas.

After participants were asked to consider concepts associated with stewardship and environmental ethics, they were asked to consider how others in their society might feel about wild places and how they should be managed. The question asked participants to rate themselves in comparison with others in their social groups by stating what kinds of social actions they felt were important and what actions they took in relation to their stated concepts, what kinds of influences participants felt they had over others, and how they were influenced by others. These questions revealed who participants included in their social groups and how they positioned those groups in relation to the needs of wild areas in Voyageurs National Park.

Once participants were encouraged to think about themselves in context with their social group they were asked to consider how they felt about sharing responsibility for waterways like the Rainy River drainage basin<sup>9</sup> with people from another country or culture. The Rainy River drainage basin includes private and public land in the U.S. and

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<sup>9</sup> Voyageurs National Park is included in the Rainy River drainage basin.

Canada. It is also part of the traditional home of the Ojibwe so people from two countries and numerous social groups have connections to the ecosystems in the area, particularly the waterways. Their responses were used to determine if their perspectives would change if they were asked to shift from sharing with their own social group to a group of “others.” Responses were examined for issues related to power and control, and how participants might create language to construct and share knowledge with others outside their social group.

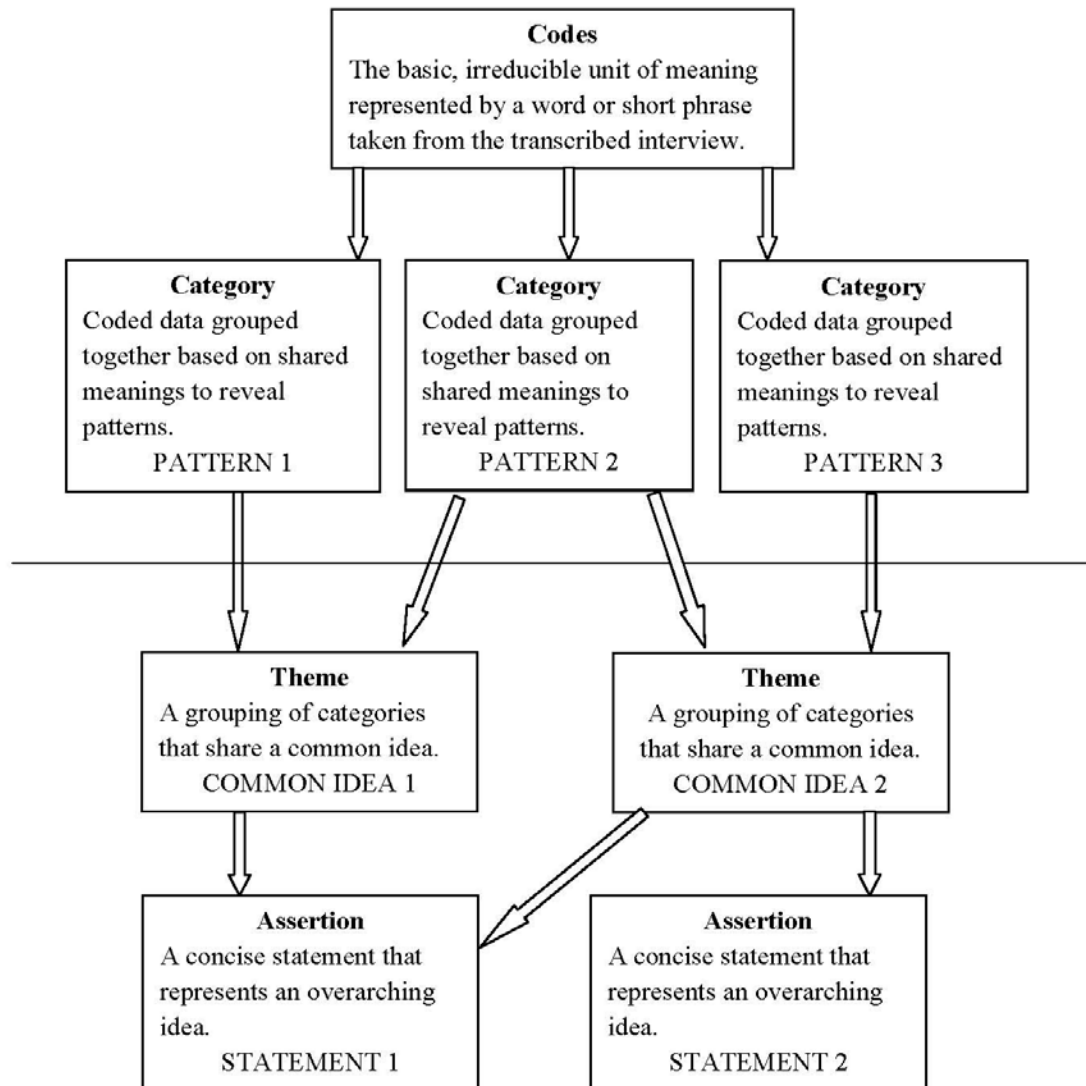
At the end of the third interview participants were asked if they had anything to share. When the interviews were complete the related field notes were compiled and the interview transcriptions evaluated in relation to earlier data collected. It was time to code the data and prepare for data analysis.

### Coding and Analyzing Data

Participant data were coded and analyzed to identify emergent themes or explanations. Data were organized into four successive groups; codes, categories, themes, and assertions. These groupings were developed based on work by Professor Johnny Saldaña from Arizona State University, who describes 29 different approaches to coding in his book, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (2009). For this dissertation a code is defined as a basic, irreducible unit of meaning expressed in the data as a word or short phrases drawn from participant interviews. Codes were consistently organized and evaluated in different stages of analysis. These stages included categories, themes, and assertions. (See Figure 1) A category is a grouping of codes that share a common concrete topic. Categories are groupings of coded data that reveal patterns. The patterns were identified by deleting, condensing, and interpreting the code groupings to find

## General Coding Chart

**First Cycle Coding** – Focus on data identification and organization.  
Utilized Initial, InVivo, and Values coding methods.



**Second Cycle Coding** – specific statements drawn from the data through data analysis.  
Utilized Focused, Pattern, and Theoretical coding methods.

Figure 1: General Coding Chart

consistent premises expressed as the most comprehensive, irreducible element articulated in that group. Themes were drawn from categories. A theme is a grouping of elements represented in categories that share a common idea. They were developed by reexamining the data arranged in categories and analyzing it to find general concepts and perspectives. Elements were drawn from more than one category to create a theme. The concepts expressed in themes were encapsulated in assertions. An assertion is a concise statement that represents an overarching idea. Assertions were created as brief statements used to represent one or more common theme or belief expressed across the data. These relatively short statements represent complicated conclusions in a way that is convenient for other researchers to understand and utilize in their work.

The coding process was divided into two stages based on Saldaña's (2009) first and second cycle coding. First cycle coding focused on data identification and organization while second cycle coding used data analysis methods to derive specific statements drawn from the data. First cycle coding concentrated on identifying and separating relevant data so it could be examined, then grouping codes with similar elements in categories. Second cycle coding drew on theoretical analysis based on the research questions and the purpose of the dissertation, then reorganized coded elements based on interconnected patterns. When patterns revealed interconnections in their meanings, these related meanings were recombined to create themes by eliminating weak or unrelated elements and combining those concepts that supported a central concept. Themes were condensed to create assertions, which are one or two concise statements drawn from data to represent an overarching idea. When assertions are used to represent



complicated concepts expressed in condensed statements, it is easier to compare those with related themes and draw conclusions from them.

### *Code Methods*

Specific types of coding methods were used at each step of the coding process. Meaning was developed in each stage of categorization based on Saldaña's (2009) descriptions regarding different ways to approach coding. Coding methods Saldaña described as Initial, In Vivo, and Values were used to develop code groups and categories by organizing relevant data in the first cycle coding. It was possible to broadly observe, track, and analyze the different types of communication participants used. The Initial coding method organized the raw data by breaking it into discrete parts, examining each closely, and comparing those parts for similarities and differences while remaining sensitive to the possible theoretical directions indicated in the data (Saldaña, 2009, p. 81).

Concepts from In Vivo and Initial coding were primarily used to separate relevant from irrelevant data and to create initial codes. In Vivo identifies short words or phrases quoted directly from participants for coding (Saldaña, 2009, p. 74; Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1976; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Initial coding is attuned to the participant language, perspectives, and world views so participants can represent different social backgrounds and unique perspectives (Saldaña, 2009, p. 48). These coding methods are effective ways to identify relevant data without losing the participants' language or original voice.

Values coding method was used to apply codes to qualitative data in a way that reflected the participant's views, beliefs, and attitudes (Saldaña, 2009, p. 89). It was used

to group coded data based on the level of importance each participant indicated he or she placed on the person, thing, idea, or statement about the self, reflected in that code.

The next grouping, categories, examined codes and identified areas where participants described social processes that created related elements relevant to the dissertation questions. These connections refined the data groupings and revealed instances where data point to more than one influence and revealed concepts participants indicated were particularly important.

Categories allowed data to move from general to specific concepts by recognizing indications of different social events interacting with each other. After the categories were developed these new groups were refined by comparing them to each other and analyzing them in relation to the original transcriptions. The process allowed some categories to be deleted, some combined, and others refined to generate meaning (Delamont, 1992). The process strengthened the relationship between the remaining data and the research questions. Categorizing created an opportunity to think about the data in a new way by experimenting with the code groups (Dey, 1993).

The next stage, second cycle coding, was used to develop themes and assertions. This step involved moving from facts recorded in the data in the first cycle to statements based on interpretation and analysis in the second cycle. The first cycle simplified the data by isolating relevant elements. The second cycle allowed expansion of data possibilities through reevaluation of data and reconceptualizing them to open up a wider range of analytical possibilities (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 29).

Second cycle coding was used to apply analytic strategy suggested in Focused, Pattern, and Theoretical coding methods to the categories. The goal was to develop

groupings by looking for comparable elements and transferability of theoretical concepts emerging from the categories.

Focused and Pattern coding methods were used to create themes. Focused coding method identified the most frequently used or significant code groups and categories to develop “the most salient categories” in the data body that require “decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 156; Charmaz, 2006, pp. 46, 57). Pattern coding was used to identify comparable coded data (Saldaña, 1995, p. 150).

Assertions were created by examining the patterns, themes, and regularities as well as contrasts, paradoxes, and irregularities in relevant data, allowing the researcher to move toward generalizing and theorizing from the data (Delamont, 1992). Assertions are attempts to derive useful, evident conclusions from data by identifying significant elements participants’ expressed and recognizing interactions between meanings in the social context in which they were created. They expressed what might be considered logical observations by combining conclusions from each step to create analytic schemes which should be obvious to most readers (Morse, 1994, p. 25). These brief statements reflected all the products of analysis, condensed into a few words, which seem to explain what the research is about (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 146). They are designed to help readers use the results from this dissertation effectively by identifying the primary themes of the research.

#### *Justification for the Method*

Coding was used to evaluate data because it was the most effective way to organize, evaluate, and analyze the data collected through participant interviews. The

different coding methods allowed flexibility necessary to consider unforeseen results in the data and allowed results to emerge progressively. Coding was used to separate the relevant data from the large amount of raw data collected in the interviews. Once the data were organized into codes and categories it was possible to extrapolate meanings by re-reading relevant elements in the interviews and identifying similarities, differences, and relationships relative to the research questions. Concepts were based on the research questions and the social context in which the data were represented by the participants. Concepts were strengthened by combining codes with related topics so the elements of meaning each code expressed could be evaluated in relation to others in the grouping. The concepts were reconfigured into themes by focusing on relevant data elements that appeared frequently in the concepts groupings and eliminating data unrelated to research questions. Themes were summarized into assertions, which combine relevant elements from the themes to create a concise review of important concepts in the dissertation. Assertions allow readers to quickly grasp main elements in the dissertation and easily utilize the findings in research from other disciplines.

One possible drawback to this method would be the close interaction between data collection and analysis, and the researcher. Data collection and analysis was influenced by researcher knowledge of the people, places, and events discussed in the interview process, and interpretation of the data were used to draw conclusions. The level of researcher involvement in the data collection and analysis could make it difficult for another researcher to recreate the results in different locations, with different types of social groups. However, other researchers should be able to adapt different coding

methods to the particular place and circumstances in their research by using this dissertation as a model.

Glesne addresses questions surrounding researcher involvement in data collection by referring to the question under investigation, the context of the study, and the researcher's theoretical perspective. Glesne said, "What is best done is less a case of what is established as right than of what your judgment tells you is fitting" (2006, p. 50). In this study my familiarity with the community, the participants, and Voyageurs National Park created opportunities and access to research sources someone new to the community might have missed. My knowledge of the community and the circumstances surrounding the park allowed me to identify important issues related to communication between park staff and local community members. My knowledge of the area and circumstances made it easier for me to follow the very different types of information each participant contributed. Mainville described her relationship with the park environment in relation to her concepts of herself as an Ojibwe, Grim contributed a great deal of scientific and historic background during his interviews, and Cole shared her experiences with the National Park Service community and the local community in Voyageurs National Park area. Each of these participants is a specialist in her or his field of expertise. Our shared background as members of the local community and working with the park gave us common ground on which to establish meaningful communication during the interview process.

These research findings were influenced by my shared experiences and knowledge in concrete ways. Mainville's connections to her Ojibwe heritage are important to her so approaching this participant with a basic understanding of these social

influences gave access to this participant and allowed us to develop interpersonal connections during data collection in the interview process. Grim described research projects such as the eagle recovery, water levels, and his other scientific work during his interviews. Seasonal and volunteer Voyageurs National Park employees are exposed to this research during orientation so my previous work with the park so I was prepared when Grim described how his work influenced his relationship with the biota in the park. There was no need for him to digress and establish the background for his narratives. Cole talked about the kinds of community relationships she experienced when she lived with people connected to the National Park Service and the community relationships she experienced when she moved to a community near Voyageurs National Park. I am a local community member with affiliations to the park, so I was able to identify aspects relevant to this research. In each instance researcher involvement in the data collection setting improved data quality and allowed deeper analysis during the coding process.

This research described relationships between people and Voyageurs National Park ecosystems. The participant narratives describe how those relationships are changing and describe some of the issues driving the behavior change. I enjoy outdoor recreation so I have been influenced by the new guidelines researchers such as those with the National Park Service recommend to preserve and protect the areas I utilize. My personal experiences allowed me to understand the perspectives of local community members who lost access to natural resources when Voyageurs National Park was formed and understand why these changes are necessary to protect remaining natural places.

### CHAPTER III

#### IDA MAINVILLE

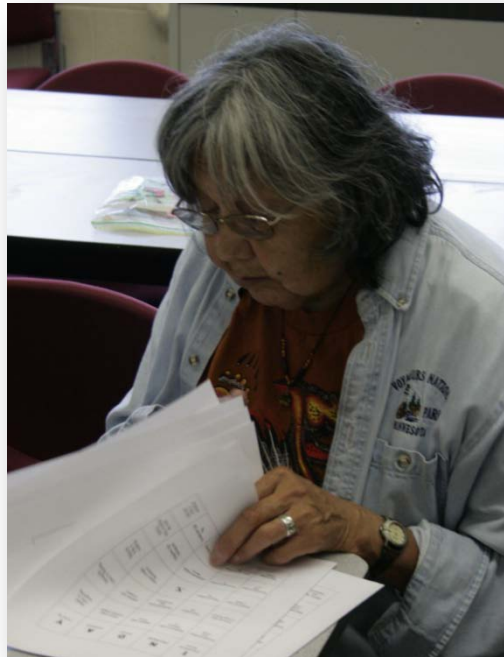


Figure 2: Ida Mainville at Ojibwe Immersion Camp, studying Ojibwe language lesson sheets. Taken Sept. 2010 by Charlotte Klesman.

Ida Mainville was the first person invited to participate in this study. She was selected because she is an Ojibwe Indian, raised in the traditional culture, and the area now included in Voyageurs National Park was once part of the Ojibwe homeland.<sup>10</sup> She has close ties to the park and the staff, she works at the park as a volunteer and in the

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<sup>10</sup> The site of the Shea Shea Bar and Restaurant in Black Bay, near Rainy Lake Visitor Center in Voyageurs National Park, was once the site of the Ojibwe summer fish camp and the area where they harvested wild rice.

summer she works at the historic Kettle Falls Hotel which is included in the park.

Mainville said she loves to be out in nature, particularly in Voyageurs National Park, and she was willing to share her experiences.

Mainville's narratives reflect her Ojibwe society, particularly in the ways she expressed specific, personal connections to the environment in and near the park through her associations with the plants and animals living there. She said her most important traditional Ojibwe teachings came from her father, who taught her to show respect by leaving a gift of tobacco when she took something from nature, to only take what she needed, and to share with others.

#### Introduction to Ida Mainville

Mainville was interviewed three times: on June 29, July 16, and July 20, 2010. During the interviews she said natural resources were an important part of her life and society, particularly when she was growing up. The dialogue she used in her interviews addressed the central question, "How do research participants' interested in the natural ecosystems in and surrounding Voyageurs National Park describe stewardship of the land with others in their community, particularly those from different backgrounds?"

Mainville's experiences growing up on a reserve in Canada and as an adult Ojibwe surrounded by non-Native people addressed the elements in this question. Mainville's narrative also addressed elements in the subquestions: 1) what kinds of communication do the study participants use to negotiate management of shared natural resources, 2) how do the participants define the terms "environmental ethics" and "stewardship," and 3) how do they place value on their experiences in the wilderness? Her descriptions of her relationships with Voyageurs National Park employees and her experiences working with



them demonstrate her willingness to share her cultural use of natural resources with others, she discussed the ethics behind her gratitude for the gifts she received from nature, and she talked about how she placed value on her experiences in the wilderness when she was growing up and as an adult.

The following introduction was drawn from the first interview, conducted on June 29, 2010. It places Mainville in the appropriate social and physical setting to allow readers to identify the connections between the research questions and the data identified in the data analysis presented later in this chapter.

Mainville is a First Nations Indian from the Ojibwe tribe of Anishinaabe. A member of the Bear clan, she was born in the 1940s and grew up on the Lac Seul Reserve in Canada.<sup>11</sup> She was sent to residential school when she was three, after her mother died. During her childhood she spent summers at home with her father, step-mother, and siblings, and then returned to residential school in the fall. She stopped going to school when she was twelve years old because she was needed at home to care for her siblings. As she grew older Mainville decided she wanted to leave the reserve. When she was 15 she was offered a job near Fort Francis, Ontario, working for a lodge. She met her husband there, married when she was 18 years old, and settled into the log cabin she and her husband built. After her marriage she continued to work as a housekeeper at the lodge and to care for her growing family. (Interview June 29, 2010)

Mainville said she cannot remember when she started volunteering at Voyageurs National Park. Her first job was loading and steering one of the park's big canoes<sup>12</sup> while a seasonal employee gave a guided tour. At first she was too shy to speak, but one of the

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<sup>11</sup> Mainville was not asked to give her birth date. It was not relevant to this study.

<sup>12</sup> Voyageurs National Park offered North Canoe trips in a 26 foot long canoe with two costumed guides.

seasonal employees encouraged Mainville to share her experiences growing up as an Ojibwe with him. Soon he asked her to talk during the tours. She would tell visitors stories about her life on the reserve and teach them to speak a few words of Ojibwe. (Interview June 29, 2010)

Mainville also worked at Kettle Falls during the summer tourist season. Sometimes guests would ask about the local Ojibwe so she gave a few talks and directed an occasional canoe trip for guests on Rainy Lake. Voyageurs National Park also offered summer boat tours to Kettle Falls, and when the tourists arrived Mainville would walk with the group and listen to the tour guide. Eventually the tour guide asked Mainville to conduct the Kettle Falls dam tour and talk about the Ojibwe who used to live in the area. (Interview June 29, 2010)

At the time the interviews were conducted Mainville often traveled between Fort Francis in Canada and International Falls on the U.S. side of the border. She said she often went to Voyageurs National Park, where the staff knew and welcomed her. She came to the park to experience nature and she appreciated the park's role in protecting this natural area. She said she had seen wilderness areas disappear. She was uncomfortable with the loss of previously natural spaces in Canada to logging and development. She specifically mentioned her concern for birds and forested areas. Mainville said she felt happy in Voyageurs National Park. She said, "That's my happiest. The happiest feeling I have, personally, is when I'm sitting in a canoe with a paddle in my hand." (Interview July 16, 2010)

## An Overview of Mainville's Ojibwe Society

Mainville said traditional Ojibwe society had close spiritual and physical connections to the ecosystems where the people live. She said she was “taught to respect everything” (Interview June 29, 2010) as part of her traditional Ojibwe teachings, passed on from her father, because “it has a right to be on this earth. Everything” (Interview July 16, 2010). She said her community expressed these connections by demonstrating respect and gratitude for the gifts the land gave them by leaving gifts of tobacco. She said, “[T]obacco means a lot to us, but when we take something we put the tobacco there, you know, and be grateful, be grateful for what this plant or whatever is doing for us” (Interview July 16, 2010). In the social system Mainville described, the Ojibwe demonstrated their respect and gratitude by leaving gifts of tobacco in exchange for taking resources such as deer, birch bark, and wild rice. She said her traditional teachings instructed the Ojibwe to take only what they needed and to share with others in their clan. Specific themes developed in relation to Mainville's narrative:

- Mainville described the Ojibwe society as an integral part of the environmental community, moving to new locations based on the seasons to take advantage of natural resources
- Members of the same clan were considered family and totem animals were given special social standing
- Hunters had to give reciprocal gifts, demonstrate the right attitude, have genuine need, and properly dispose of bones from animals they killed to be successful

- The Ojibwe created an intricate social network of people, animals, and manitous, or those who live between the physical and spirit world, linking them to the local environment
- Gifts of tobacco were used to show gratitude and respect. Demonstrations of natural, supernatural, and political power were respected
- Social skills were valued and the Ojibwe were eloquent speakers

In her narrative Mainville described people as part of the environmental community. She said “...[T]hat’s (the environment’s) where all our food came from. From the moose, the deer, the fish...” (Interview July 20, 2010). She repeatedly described how the people in her society were careful to give thanks, show respect, and leave tobacco as a gift to acknowledge dependence on natural and spiritual forces. Her description of the relationship between her family and her clan totem animal, the bear, illustrated the close, personal relationship her culture encouraged between nature and people. She said, “[Dad] told us ... the bear, it was like our family. And we weren’t supposed to ... eat the bear” (Interview July 16, 2010). Her narrative described her community as members with more or less equal standing in relation to some non-human others living in the same environment (Callicott & Nelson, 2004).

Mainville’s account illustrated social awareness of natural events. She said, “I think Native people are always more aware of nature. It’s not like they’re scientists or anything but they notice things and Elders talk about it. And I notice a lot of things.” (Interview July 16, 2010) She went on to describe how she missed the bees she used to hear when her family picked berries in the evening, how the plethora of frogs and toads

she remembers stepping around when she was walking after dark are gone, and how the water beetles which “used to be so numerous” have gone (Interview July 16, 2010). She said, “I don’t see that anymore. It’s scary to me. You know? So I think in those days, when the Elders could see this happening and of course they couldn’t do anything about it.” (Interview July 16, 2010)

In her narratives Mainville described the close association between her family, nature, and the seasons. Each season her family would join others from the Bear clan and move to a different spot on the reserve where they could collect natural resources. In the summer they went to pick berries, particularly blueberries. In the fall they hunted and fished, and when winter came they moved to houses grouped in a clearing near the water. (Interview July 20, 2010) The men would leave for long periods of time to tend trap lines and hunt. If a hunter was successful, particularly if he killed a moose in the summer when the meat was likely to spoil, everyone was given a share. People devoted time and energy to socializing, often traveling to visit friends or family, and gathering to talk in the evenings. (Interview June 29, 2010)

Since Mainville was sent to boarding school when she was three years old she did not have many opportunities to learn from adults in her community. However, she did go back to her family during the summers. She said her father told her things when she was very young (Interview July 16, 2010). He taught her and her siblings to leave tobacco (Interview June 29, 2010) and how to use it to appease the spirits (Interview July 20, 2010). She described demonstrating respect for the gifts of nature as a spiritual responsibility when she said, “[N]othing hardly went to waste” (Interview June 29, 2010).

Mainville described other members of the Bear clan as members of her immediate family. They addressed each other as “brother” and “sister” even if they were not related by blood or marriage (Interview June 29, 2010). Members of the same clan were not allowed to marry (Interview June 29, 2010). Mainville recalled her father naming the other families in the Bear clan and telling her not to marry inside her clan (Interview July 20, 2010). Bear clan members were not allowed to eat bear meat or to kill bears. However, Mainville described a particularly hungry winter when her father asked an elder for permission to kill a sow and her cubs so they would not starve. (Interview July 20, 2010). She said he asked for and received this gift from the bears to sustain their lives. She said her father told them to show respect for animals such as deer and beaver by returning their bones to the places where they lived and their jaws to the things they liked to eat. She described how he would hang a beaver’s jaw on a birch bark tree because this is what the beaver liked to eat while it was alive. (Interview June 29, 2010)

The totem, or dodem, Mainville described functioned as a symbol of the ancestral life forces. The traditional Ojibwe decide questions of blood relationships and marriage eligibility through approximately 21 totems (Warren, 2009, pp. 44-5). Village groups from one totem moved together, with each family acting as a separate, cooperative unit (Grim, 1983, p. 62).

Mainville’s description of her father’s relationship with the environment, particularly with the animals he hunted and trapped, is reflected in the traditional stories researchers collected from Ojibwe. Callicott and Nelson (2004, p. 113-4) evaluated traditional Ojibwe stories about reciprocity and the boundary between life and death as they were applied to the relationship between people and animals. Hunters who wanted to

be successful must do four things: give reciprocal gifts, demonstrate the right attitude, have genuine need, and properly dispose of bones. Mainville's narrative also described instructions to hunters, delivered in traditional stories about hunting moose and beaver. Animals were expected to feel something similar to pity for hunters who need to eat and to give themselves willingly. Bears are mentioned as particularly sympathetic to people and willing to interact with them in the traditional stories, and they were seen as having preternatural power beyond their natural abilities. (Callicott and Nelson, 2004, p. 113-4)

This and the totem status of bears adds another dimension to the dilemma Mainville's father faced when he asked for permission to kill a bear to keep his family from starving. He risked angering the manitous who might make it difficult for him to hunt successfully after this crisis passed.

The social interaction Mainville described between hunters and prey animals was built on trust. Hunters trusted their prey to offer themselves and animals trusted hunters to handle their bones properly. If the bones are burned, broken or eaten by dogs the animal would return maimed or perhaps not come back at all. In the time between their deaths and their new lives they enjoyed the offerings they received from grateful hunters. (Callicott and Nelson, 2004, p. 116)

The Ojibwe Indian stories and traditions describe a social network of people, animals, and manitous living in the integrated natural and preternatural worlds, interacting through relationships with each other just as the Ojibwe did. Manitous are not-quite-people who live in the physical world and the spirit world, each with a distinct personality. The word is connected with power. To Ojibwe, it means a spirit has been transformed into a phenomenal appearance. Callicott and Nelson (2004, p. 104-5) state

the Ojibwe seem to have used their language skills to create a social structure in which societies of animals, manitous, and people live in similar communities with family and tribal groups, show individual personal characteristics, visit each other socially, refer to each other in kinship terms such as grandmother and little brother, and sometimes marry and have children. In this structure every being can be identified as a member of a family, clan, and tribe, all are socially integrated and interact with each other. (Callicott & Nelson, 2004, pp. 104-5)

Callicott and Nelson identify key points in their interpretations of the traditional stories. They found only certain people marry certain animals, not all animals are respected,<sup>13</sup> animals are expected to show respect for people and people for the animals they have associations with, and some relationships between people and animals are designed to give people the advantage. Pain and suffering are not relevant in the traditional stories. Some characters suffer a great deal but giving and receiving respect is considered more important. Callicott and Nelson also identify the ethical rules people must follow if they are to be successful hunters. They are; 1) only truly needy hunters may kill animals, 2) the animals must be given some gift of an agricultural or manufactured product, and 3) the hunter must return the animal's bones, intact, to the element where it lived so it may be reborn. The stories tell of animals enjoying pipes of tobacco, warm blankets and other luxuries before they are reborn in their bones. In this relationship animals and humans respect each other and hunters realize animals give their fur, feathers, and flesh because they have no other gift to give.

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<sup>13</sup> Callicott and Nelson describe an Ojibwe manitou named Covered-in-Fir, a human hero figure who beats his first four animal wives, then leaves them.



Mainville said tobacco was central to her traditional way of life. She used it to show gratitude for gifts of nature. (Interview July 16, 2010) These gifts included practical items like meat and wild rice, and intangible gifts like the beauty in bird songs and the joy of being close to nature. Mainville said, “[If] I took something even if I just see something beautiful I’ll leave tobacco” (Interview July 20, 2010). Tobacco was also offered in association with personal requests. Mainville described her father offering tobacco when the family was in a boat and the water became dangerously rough. She said her father put the boat on the beach, offered a gift of tobacco, and said something to the water. Several hours later the weather calmed and they were able to continue their travels. She said her father told her and her siblings they could not fight the power of the water or of nature. If they were going to capsize and drown it was destined to happen. There was nothing they could do to change it. She said his actions demonstrated respect for the power of nature and his acceptance of his inability to overcome that power. (Interview July 20, 2010)

Mainville did not remember being taught what she described as the traditional ways of the Ojibwe (Interview June 29, 2010) but said she learned by watching her father and other adults (Interview July 16, 2010).<sup>14</sup> She said adult behavior demonstrated to the children what they should do and how they should behave through example. Mainville did feel she may have missed some of the traditional teachings because her mother died when she was young, but she said her father tried to make up for her loss by telling her about the things her mother would normally have shown her (Interview July 16, 2010).

Callicott and Nelson (2004, p. 101) also describe the important role narrative storytelling

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<sup>14</sup> Mainville consistently summarized traditional teachings she followed as respect for everything, gratitude for the gifts of nature, and showing appreciation by using everything they were given and giving tobacco (Interviews July 16, July 20, and June 29, 2010)

and teaching by example play in passing traditional Ojibwe culture and world view on to the next generation.

Mainville also mentioned dreams, particularly in relation to reincarnation of older Ojibwe as young children. She said “[I]n our culture they believe in reincarnation. One of my sisters came back from some lady that lived a long time ago, but somebody dreams this when they’re born. Some elder will dream that’s a person” (Interview June 29, 2010) She described other customs based on belief in reincarnation when she said, “[O]ne of my sisters younger than me, when she was born, some other family lost a little girl that was born at the same time. So they kind of like adopt that child. Every time, when a birthday comes they used to bring my sister a present and stuff like that. ‘Cause the memory of their little girl. And I thought that was a nice custom. And after I’d lost my sons, you know, I thought about that you know.” (Interview June 29, 2010)

The teaching narratives were also entertaining. Mainville described the Ojibwe as happy, friendly people who like to talk to each other and enjoy telling stories (Interview June 29, 2010). Ojibwe culture is noted for eloquent speakers. Deloria (1998, p. 33) said early European observers praised the Native Americans for their rhetorical and speech-making abilities, particularly the Ojibwe. He describes the Ojibwe ability to manipulate ideas with descriptive language helped them develop and maintain their concepts of community through storytelling and other types of narration. Their use of metaphor suggests continuous shifting, replacement, and doubling of ideas and identities, allowing the words to reinforce each other. (Deloria, 1998, p.33) It encouraged the speaker and listeners to develop a way of thinking that allowed them to become something they were not in the physical. Language scholars argue that language represents reality, and

therefore is important in framing the experience of reality for the users (Deloria, 1998, p. 33). This use of metaphors made the shift in identities seem almost natural and supports the creation of characters described as human, animal and “other-than-human persons” in traditional Ojibwe stories (Callicott & Nelson, 2004).

The Ojibwe use particular linguistic devices to construct and share narratives. Valentine describes storytellers who use certain linguistic devices which can be adjusted inside the narrative. The types of linguistic devices do not necessarily differ from one genre of story to the next, but particular devices are emphasized in some genres and other devices are emphasized in others based on the type of story being told (1995, p. 185) She describes the use of interjections, laughter, comparisons, and intensifiers as examples.

Mainville’s description of the traditional Ojibwe perspective toward nature is not the same as the one visualized by most non-Native people living in the Voyageurs National Park area. Hallowell said “cultural variables are inevitable constituents of human perception” because personal experience is organized and perceived through culturally shaped linguistic structure and conceptual framework. He suggests attempting to appreciate the validity of each culture’s world view rather than using our own as the standard against which others should be measured (Callicott & Nelson, 2004, pp. 100-1; Hallowell, 1951, pp. 171-2). Callicott and Nelson elaborate on his concept by defining a tenable world view as one that is comprehensive, self-consistent, pragmatically sustainable, good, and beautiful (2004, p. 101).

#### The Interview Process with Mainville

The first interview on June 29, 2010, established Mainville’s past history, particularly social influences that might impact her personal identity and attachments she

might develop with the natural environment. It also established her personality traits relevant to the study, such as outdoor activities or personal beliefs relevant to her relationship with nature. She was also asked to describe people and events she felt created a strong influence on her beliefs and behaviors. Her answers to these questions established the context in which she developed her narrative later, in the next two interviews.

In the second interview Mainville was asked to share specific experiences she had with nature while she was growing up and describe what, if any, activities she performed outside as an adult. The interview began with a brief review of the final discussion from the first interview, so she would have a mental image of the original circumstances she had described and could relate her descriptions to relevant social conditions. She was encouraged to describe moving between interrelated social events, practices, and structures in which her narrative was placed, and to describe her perspective of related social action and agency (Fairclough, 2003, p. 205 & 223). She was encouraged to illustrate her statements about her beliefs and social influences with examples and personal stories. These narratives supported her conclusions and offered guidelines to interpret the meanings behind the actions she described. She was encouraged to share how she placed value on natural resources, both growing up and as an adult, and to describe what specific needs, if any, natural resources fulfilled.

In the third interview Mainville was asked to define the terms “stewardship” and “environmental ethics” in the context established during previous interviews. She was also encouraged to describe her personal relationships with nature and Voyageurs

National Park in relation to her definitions of the two key terms. She was asked to describe what sorts of personal value her associations with nature contributed to her life.

### Data Analysis Chart

A data analysis chart was used to identify meanings attached to words and phrases Mainville indicated were important to her. Relevant words and phrases were identified and coded using based on the central question and the three subquestions. The chart allows results of data analysis to be visually organized so it will be easier to interpret and use. An overview of the charts illustrates how each grouping of codes was drawn from the previous interpretations. (See Figure 3)

Data analysis began by carefully reading the transcribed interviews with Mainville to identify words and phrases relevant to the central research question and two subquestions, which were the basis for the research. The three transcribed copies of her interviews were reviewed multiple times, and words and phrases related to the research questions were identified and coded. Coded data consisted of a short word or phrase used to represent an idea or a concept expressed in the most basic form. Data were sorted by the context and setting in which the words or phrases were used, including the perspective Mainville contributed to the data. This included the way she described her relationships with people and objects related to Voyageurs National Park and the local environment which she discussed during the interview process, her perspective on the Ojibwe social structure, and the way she used her culture for guidance in her relationships. (Creswell, 2003, pp. 190 – 5).

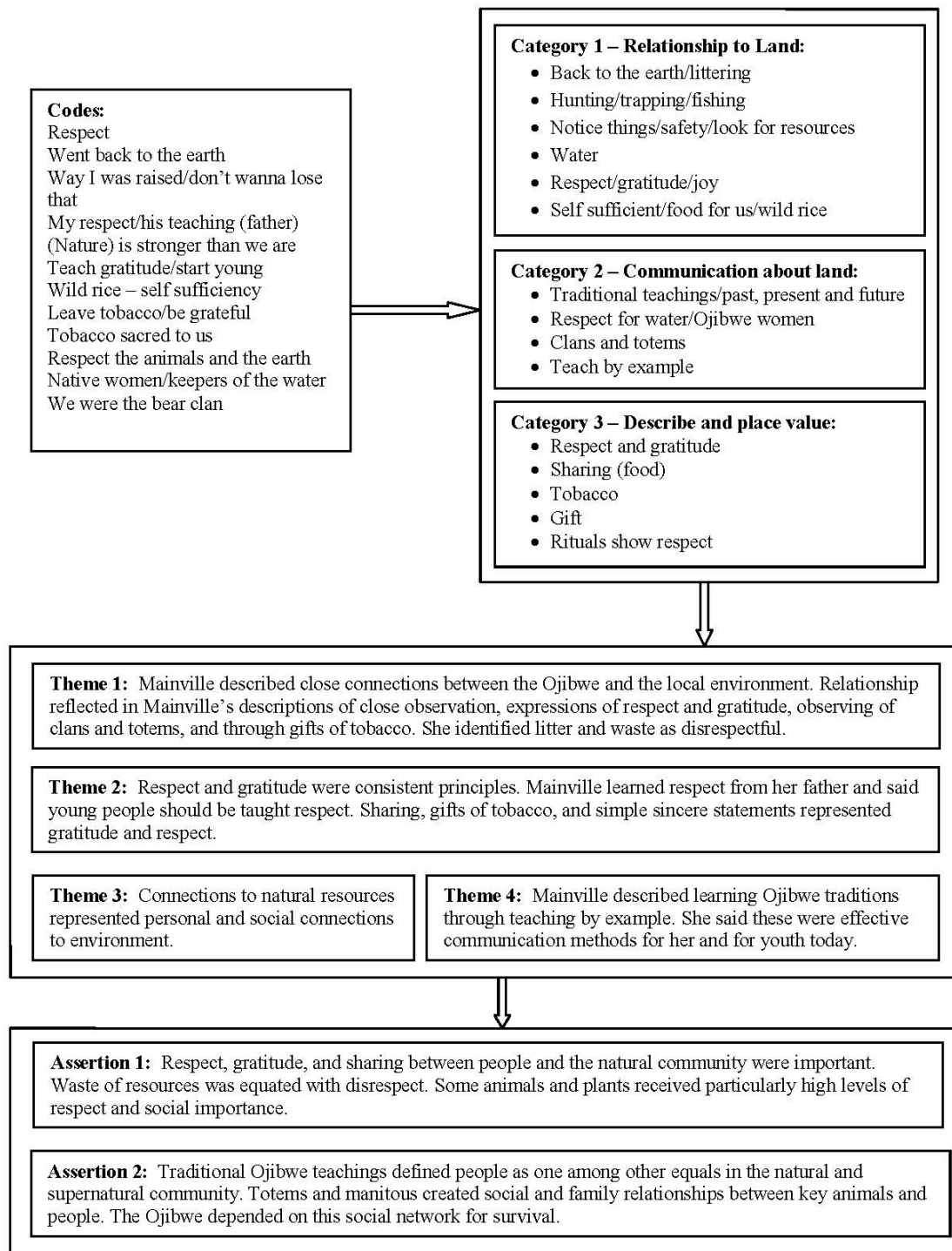


Figure 3: Overview of Mainville Data Analysis Charts

Respect	Gift from that tree
Everybody shared more in those days	Dad taught to leave tobacco
Went back to the earth	Leave tobacco/be grateful
Way I was raised/don't wanna lose that	Tobacco sacred to us
Dad/respect everything and everyone	Dad/tobacco to calm water
Dad/respect rapids/mightier than we are	Respect the animals (hunting and trapping) and the earth
My respect ... comes from his teaching	Native women/keepers of the water
Native people more aware/notice things	Nothing hardly went to waste
(Nature) is stronger than we are	Moved wherever blueberries/fish were
(All life) has a right to be on this earth	Respect the animals
Everything has a purpose	Throw bones in the pond/hang skull and jaw on tree
Can't just <b>take</b> things	We were bear clan
Teach gratitude/start young	We're all like related/bear clan
Wild rice that's another thing	Bear was like our family/weren't to eat bear meat
Show kids how to take wild rice	
Used to have our own rice	
Self sufficient/food for us	

Figure 4: Initial Coded Data for Mainville

### *Categories*

Code groups were analyzed to identify the key factors and the relationships between them (Wolcott, 1994; Glesne, 2006, p. 164) by reorganizing them into categories. Categories are groupings of coded data that reveal patterns by deleting, condensing, and interpreting them to find consistent topics, expressed as the most comprehensive, irreducible element articulated in that group. Systematic interpretation of the data were based on an organized system used to identify and describe patterned irregularities in the data (Glesne, 2006, p. 164). Systematic interpretation based on first cycle coding (Saldaña, 2009, p. 6) allowed essential features in each code group to be identified, comprehended, and considered in relation to how the groups interacted with

each other. Interactions were identified based on concepts related to the research topic which Mainville indicated were important to her through verbal and nonverbal cues. These cues included repetition, changes in the tone, volume, and pitch of her voice, and the context in which the words and phrases were used to indicate relevance.

Data analysis took place over a period of time, and involved reading and rereading the transcripts to allow time to interpret the general intent of the dialogue. Key points in data analysis included how Mainville expressed herself on issues related to Voyageurs National Park, what sort of emotional connections she might have to the area, and how she associated herself with the research subjects. Once these key words and phrases were separated from the context of Mainville's dialogue they were organized into categories based on shared meaning, and then examined to see if new concepts emerged. The chart and content evaluation are included below. (See Figure 5)

<b>Categories</b>	
<b>Relationship to land:</b>	Respect for water/Ojibwe women & Mainville
Back to the earth/littering	
Hunting/trapping/fishing	Clans and totems
Notice things/safety/look for resources	Teach by example
Water	
Respect/gratitude/joy	<b>Describe and place value:</b>
Self sufficient/food for us/wild rice	Respect and gratitude
	Sharing (food)
<b>Communication with others about land:</b>	Tobacco
Traditional teachings/past, present and future	Gift
	Rituals show respect

Figure 5: Categories for Mainville



The first category, relationship to land, included codes representing direct relationships Mainville described between people and nature. Here coded data reflected the interdependence Mainville expressed between people and the land. She described how people take resources and how they are expected to use those resources, show gratitude for them, and eventually return them to the earth. She referred to litter and waste as antonyms for gratitude and respect. Trapping, hunting, and fishing were described as common activities, since “everyone did it” (Interview June 29, 2010) She described the need to be constantly aware, or to “notice things” going on around her, particularly in nature (June 29 & July 20, 2010). Awareness allowed her to look for new natural resources and to prepare for potential emergencies. (Interview July 16, 2010). She described respect for the power and gifts of nature, and gratitude and joy as the recipient of these gifts, which were necessary for a happy life. Her statements about wild rice and self-sufficiency were powerful, heartfelt, and she said they came from her grounding in Ojibwe social beliefs (Interview July 20, 2010).

Mainville said wild rice was symbolically important to the Ojibwe society. Wild rice is linked to the spiritual migrations that brought the Ojibwe to the Voyageurs National Park area. White Earth elder Carl Hoaglund said, “We consider it to be sacred, because it’s a gift from the creator” (Gunderson & Julin, 2002). Mainville identified harvesting and preparing wild rice with concepts of self-sufficiency and social identity, particularly when passing traditional Ojibwe teachings on to the young people (Interview July 16, 2010).

The second category, communication with others about the land, includes the ways Mainville described sharing ideas, teachings, and social concepts related to human

relationships with land. She said the Ojibwe teach their children through example, and she also described traditional stories used to pass down social constructs. She particularly credited her father for ensuring she and her siblings learned important social lessons such as showing respect by leaving tobacco and following clan principles (Interview July 16, 2010). She said, “I remembered his words and that’s the way I’ve tried to live. The way he taught us, you know?” She described the Ojibwe women carrying water around Lake Superior to make people aware of this important resource. Then she linked the event with the past by describing the connection between water and Ojibwe women, who are the traditional keepers of the water. (Interview July 20, 2010)

Mainville described clans and totems as representations of specific, personal relationships between people in the Ojibwe society and the totem animal (Interview July 16, 2010). The clans and totems organized the social interaction the people constructed between themselves and their totem. Callicott and Nelson (2004) describe how the Ojibwe extend their concepts of social relationships to a “broader-than-human social world” through traditional myths. The myths describe the relationship between the Ojibwe, the animals, and the manitous (Callicott and Nelson, 2004, p. 104). They depict the Ojibwe world as socially organized in a series of layers that includes human communities, animal communities, and manitou communities, all interacting together. Every traditionally relevant being in the Ojibwe homeland would be considered a member of a family, clan, and tribe. Each would be socially integrated and interactive (Callicott and Nelson, 2004, p. 105).

The third category included elements representing the ways people described and placed value. Tobacco is consistently referenced as a cultural symbol used to represent

respect and gratitude, including for natural events, and to potentially change circumstances. The groupings, respect and gratitude, and tobacco, were listed separately to clarify the distinction between feeling a particular way toward nature and expressing those feelings by symbolically offering a gift of tobacco. Mainville said, “I was very young when my dad told me things and I still remember them, even though I went to boarding school” (Interview July 16, 2010).

Respect and gratitude also reflect the social relationships Mainville described between the people, the animals, the plants, and other natural resources the Ojibwe depended on to survive. Sharing, particularly food, not taking more than was needed, and returning the remains to the land in a appropriate way, were reflections of respect and gratitude. Mainville’s comments about her father returning the bones of the beaver to the water and hanging their skulls on the trees they like to eat demonstrated well-developed, ritualistic forms of respect for this natural resource (Interview June 29, 2010). It also reflected the Ojibwe social perception of people as one of many members of the ecosystem rather than the dominant figure. Respect and gratitude were important concepts in Mainville’s narrative. She talked about respect for the power of nature, for the bounty it gives her, and the lifestyle she enjoyed. She said her father taught her to give tobacco to show gratitude to nature for these gifts (Interview July 16, 2010). The tobacco symbolized her feelings and allowed her to act on them in a positive way (Interview June 29, 2010).

### *Themes*

Themes are groupings of categories, summarized based on a shared idea or concept. During the interview process Mainville shared narratives with strong ties to her

heritage, her family, and natural places. She described close, personal connections to the area in the reserve in Canada where she grew up and to Voyageurs National Park. She said she credited her sense of well-being to her relationship with nature, particularly resources like wild rice, and she demonstrated her appreciation by leaving tobacco to show respect. Her narrative illustrates the shift in her awareness from concept based on social influences to related action. Her narrative described the interlocking nature of her relationship with the ecosystem. (See Figure 6)

Three themes emerged from Mainville's interviews. The first was based on her description of the interconnected relationship between her culture and the natural environment. The second expressed the deep sense of respect and gratitude toward the natural environment she conveyed in her narrative. The third theme reflected the deep attachment Mainville described toward wild rice and water. She described wild rice as if it were still the principle food she and the Ojibwe need to survive, even though she also stated her lifestyle is very different now than it was when she was growing up.

The Ojibwe have deep spiritual and cultural ties to wild rice, which plays a major role in their history (Gunderson & Julin, 2002). The Anishinaabe<sup>15</sup> left the east coast and traveled west on a spiritual quest. They were told they would know they had arrived when they found the place where the food grew on the water. When they found wild rice growing in the waterways of northern Wisconsin and Minnesota, they stayed (Burns, 2012). This story gives wild rice special status in the Ojibwe culture.

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<sup>15</sup> The Ojibwe Indians are part of the Anishinaabe language group. They are commonly known as the Ojibwe in Canada and the Chippewa in the U.S.

The second category is based on Mainville's close connection to her traditional Ojibwe teachings. Her mother died when she was small so most of her teachings came from her father. She said most of his teachings were given by example but she also described specific times when he explained which rules they should follow in their relationships with nature and with others in the Ojibwe tribe. Clan status and subsequent relationships with other bear clan members and wild bears were particularly important. Mainville's father demonstrated respect for nature, symbolized in his offering a gift of

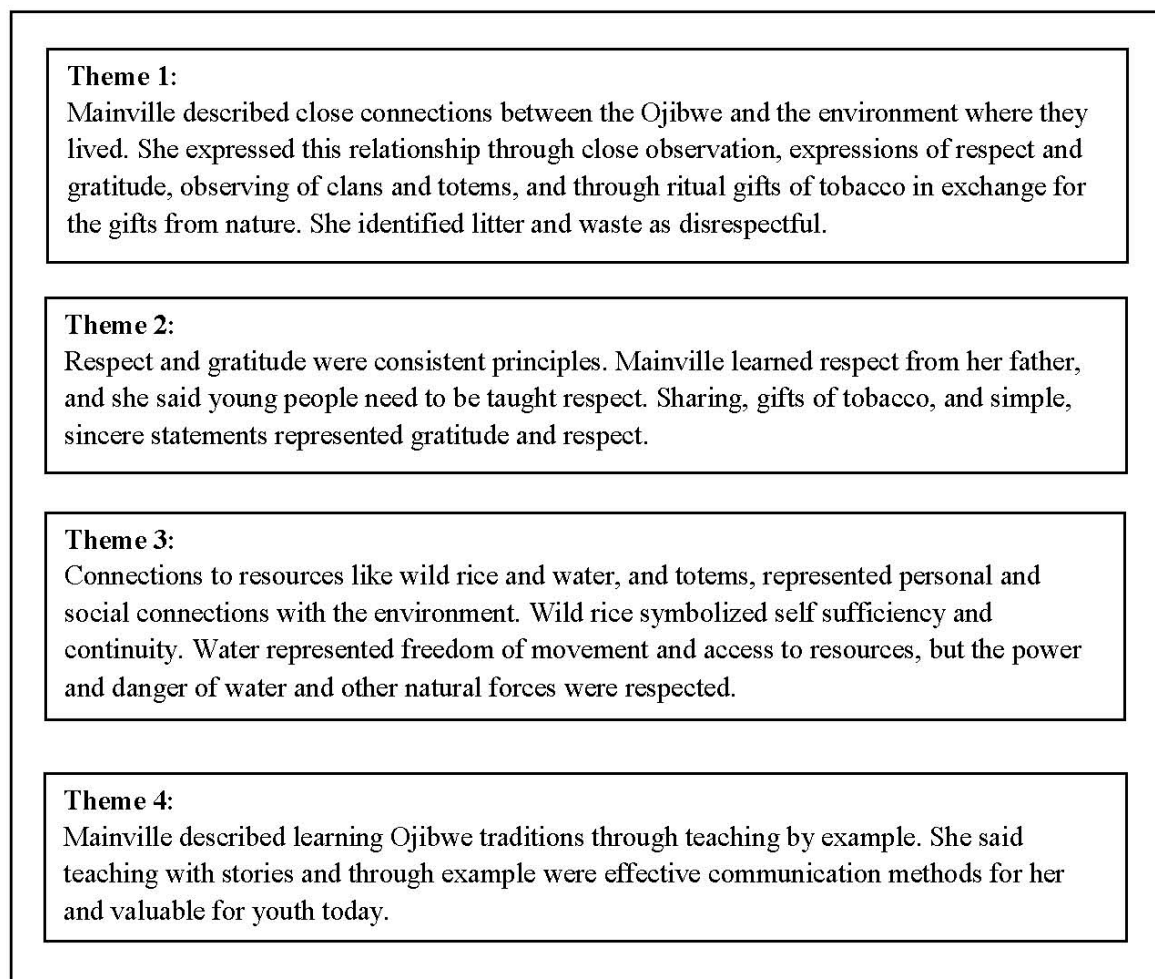


Figure 6: Themes for Mainville

tobacco, when the family was caught in a boat during a violent storm. She also described her father and others leaving gifts of tobacco when they took natural resources or to show gratitude for particular circumstances. These events were common occurrences for her, so she had many opportunities to observe and learn from the behavior of others in her social group.

### *Assertions*

Assertions are one or two concise statements drawn from the data to represent an overarching idea. They represent the significant concepts or ideas based on Mainville's narrative. (See Figure 7) Mainville described her connection to the environment, which was shaped by her Ojibwe society. She expressed her feelings in socially acceptable ways by leaving gifts of tobacco, demonstrating appreciation, and by respecting the rules regarding clans and totems. Her descriptions of her sense of relief and gratitude were consistent in the three interviews and demonstrated her commitment to the Ojibwe traditions. These ideas were merged to identify the strong relationship Mainville described with this particular area, and the ways her social ties with the Ojibwe traditions supported and valued this relationship.

The first assertion reflected the concepts of respect and gratitude toward natural forces and the natural environment Mainville described in connection with herself and the Ojibwe in northern Minnesota and southern Ontario. Her personal narratives illustrated her statements about the close spiritual relationship she said the Ojibwe hold toward the natural environment. It also reflected the sense of equality she said traditional Ojibwe teachings express toward some species, and the close connections they had with some plants, such as wild rice and birch bark. She described her father returning beaver bones

to the water as a gesture of respect. Animals sacrificed themselves for humans and received material things in the spirit world as a reward (Callicott & Nelson, 2004). Mainville also talked about the reincarnation of relatives and described several instances in which she or someone else encountered a deceased relative who had returned as another person.

The second assertion described Mainville's attitude toward possessions. Her social background emphasized personal relationships rather than acquiring material things. She said she valued self-sufficiency and personal connections with others, particularly with family and clan members. She seemed to place value on material possessions based on their usefulness. She said she keeps her possessions to a minimum, partly because possessions lead to litter and litter desecrates the spirit of the natural environment. (Interview June 29, 2010) Valentine's (1995) research on Ojibwe in Lynx Lake, Canada also describes emphasis on social interaction over possessions. Technology has meant the difference between starvation and death in the harsh climate, so the people welcomed the benefits. Guided by their elders, the people have been able to experience Western culture through selective instigation from the community based on their perception of needs. Many families spent weeks and months on their trap lines but after modern amenities came to the community they engaged in traditional lifestyles because they wanted to not because they had to. (Valentine, 1995, p. 29 – 32)

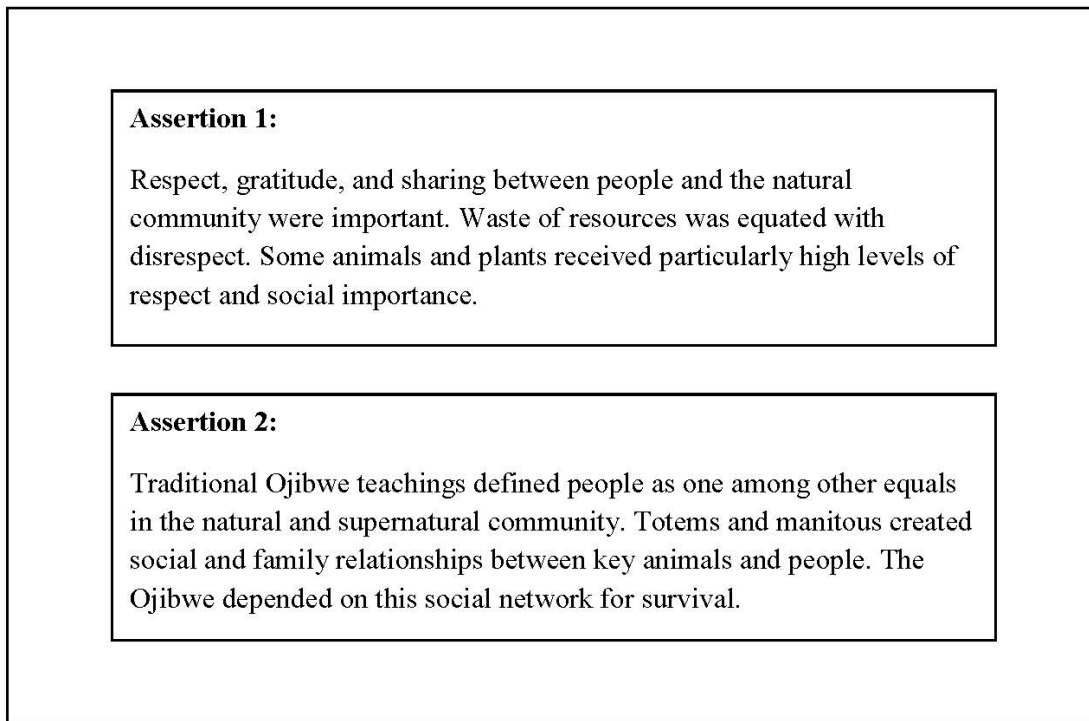


Figure 7: Assertions for Mainville

#### Conclusion

Mainville's descriptions of her relationships with natural resources indicate greater social equality between specific animals and plants, and respect for natural places and resources, than those indicated in the other two participants. Her narrative describes her relationship with natural resources, particularly wild rice and her totem animal, as integral to how she defines herself as an individual and an Ojibwe. She spoke strongly about wild rice and said it was necessary for survival because it represents self sufficiency and continuity. In her narrative, she described interdependence between specific animals, plants, and herself as an Ojibwe. She described the rituals she needed to follow to remind herself of her place in this social network and to demonstrate her appreciation to other members of the social circle. Her statements about her relationship



with some natural resources, particularly wild rice, birch bark, beaver, and bears, demonstrated close connections to the land, beyond those created by physical needs. These concepts shaped how her society identified themselves in the past and the present.

Mainville's descriptions of social relationships between some animals, totems, and manitous supported research conducted by Callicott and Nelson (2004) in their analysis of traditional Ojibwe stories. The stories depicted ritualized demonstrations of respect, gratitude, and sharing, with prohibitions on waste, which Mainville also described. These social guidelines could be compared to concepts expressed in environmental ethics and stewardship. Environmental ethical theories create conceptual parameters for discussions about issues such as placing ethical value on different life forms, particularly in relation to interactions with people. In this context the Ojibwe traditionally view themselves as one among many, with people forming social and family ties to certain animals and plants through familiar relationships created by totems, manitous, and relationships between special characters described in the traditional stories.

Mainville connected stewardship with social taboos against waste and emphasis on respect, gratitude, and sharing. The behaviors could have preserved natural resources from overuse. It also demonstrated social recognition of the power natural forces exert over people. The Ojibwe form of stewardship she described allowed people to break social conventions and take resources they needed to survive.

Mainville adapted her demonstrations of social and spiritual connections with the land to fit her modern lifestyle. She talked about the ways she and her grandchildren have learned to fit their concepts of themselves as Ojibwe into the dominant social communities where they live while retaining important connections with natural

resources. Valentine (1995) described Severn Ojibwe families who trapped and hunted because they wanted to, not because they had to. She spoke of elders who described how hard life was before technology came and how the people should be grateful for the changes. They transitioned from dependence on nature to dependence on technological resources while maintaining their traditional ties to the land. Valentine's descriptions of Ojibwe are similar to Mainville's narratives.

CHAPTER IV

LELAND GRIM



Figure 8: Eagle banding. Leland Grim is first person from the left. Taken July 5, 1998 by Charlotte Klesman

Leland (Lee) Grim was asked to participate in this study because he has strong ties to Voyageurs National Park, the local community, and the environment. He was particularly interested in birds and water-related issues. He has been involved in the bald eagle monitoring program at Voyageurs National Park since it began in 1973, working with other researchers and graduate students to track the status of eagles nesting in the

park (Voyageurs National Park, 2011). He monitored the heron rookery in the park and worked with the forest breeding bird survey. As of 2012, he was one of the four members of the International Rainy Lake Board of Control (IRLBC) which works with local communities in both Canada and the U.S. to establish water use and water quality standards for shared waterways. When Grim first arrived in International Falls he worked as a high school biology teacher. After the park was created he began to work for Voyageurs National Park in the summer. As a result he had a broad, deep knowledge of the park, the community, and how the two interact. These attributes made him an ideal participant for this study.

Analysis of Grim's interviews revealed information on structured discussion about Voyageurs National Park. For this dissertation structured discussion is communication shaped by an organization, forum, or other type of group organized around laws or rules, including those used to direct communication attributed to the group. When the interviews were conducted Grim was a member of federal and international regulating groups, as well as a Voyageurs National Park employee and a member of the International Falls community. He described the ways in which people connected to the park communicated through organizations, how they expressed concerns as individuals to organizations, and how organizations, particularly Voyageurs National Park managers, tried to communicate to the local communities and to park visitors.

#### Introduction to Leland Grim

Grim was interviewed three times: on June 29, July 19, and July 26, 2010. The questions used in the interviews were formulated to offer insights on the central research question, "How do research participants' interested in the natural ecosystems in and

surrounding Voyageurs National Park describe stewardship of the land with others in their community, particularly those from different backgrounds?” Grim’s work as a biology teacher and Voyageurs National Park employee gave him strong motivation and consistent opportunities to develop these types of conversations.

Grim’s narrative also addressed elements in the subquestions: 1) what kinds of discourse do the study participants use to negotiate management of shared natural resources, 2) how do the participants define the terms “environmental ethics” and “stewardship,” and 3) how do they place value on their experiences in the wilderness? Grim worked as an arbitrator, negotiating international regulations for shared water resources, and he represented Voyageurs National Park in the local communities through his position as a researcher there. He often arbitrated discussions between people from different cultures and with different interests in natural resources. As a park employee he was identified as a professional steward for the purposes of this dissertation. He also placed high value on his experiences in the wilderness, particularly the time he spent in Voyageurs National Park. The following introduction was drawn from the first interview with Grim, conducted on June 29, 2010. It placed his narrative in the appropriate social and physical setting to allow readers to identify the connections between the research questions and the data identified in the data analysis presented later in this chapter.

Grim was born in South Dakota and described himself as a product of prairie poverty. His parents were teachers, so he and his older brother grew up in what he described as a teacher’s household. Grim attended North Dakota State University in Fargo where he earned a degree in Biology, a certificate in education, and a Masters in Zoology with an emphasis on birds. After graduation he moved to International Falls

where he accepted a job at the new Rainy River State Junior College, now Rainy River Community College.

President Nixon signed legislation creating Voyageurs National Park in 1972 and the first park superintendent arrived soon after to hold hearings on how the park should be organized. Grim went to the hearing and told the person he met there, “I’m assuming that you’re going to hire local people to work in the park, after you become a park. I’ll be one of those lining up at the door.” (Interview June 29, 2010). He began working for the park as a seasonal biologist in 1972. He worked seasonally until he retired from teaching when he began working half-time and he has worked there every summer thereafter.

Grim said he thinks he was most influenced by his Native American friends in South Dakota, who were all members of the Sioux Indian tribes. They taught him about wildlife in the Missouri River bottom. Grim said he would leave home early in the morning and meet his friends at the edge of town where they lived. From there they would move to the river where they spent the day exploring. The Native American boys had wide-ranging practical experience regarding nature and Grim said he learned about the habitat surrounding the wild river from watching them.

Grim described himself as a young man when he came to International Falls. He said he was looking for a place where he could put down roots and become part of a community. He said he supported and defended the local people and their attitude toward Voyageurs National Park, their use of local natural resources, and their struggle to balance concepts of individual freedoms with the need to utilize natural resources in a way that benefits the community (June 29, 2010). He also described himself as a devoted Voyageurs National Park employee. While these personae might seem contradictory, he

said he often shifted his perspective between the point of view of the local people and their concerns, and the point of view of a park service employee.

An Overview of Grim's Connections to the Environment,  
Voyageurs National Park, and the Local Community

Grim described deep commitment to preserving the environment, dedication to his work with Voyageurs National Park, and close ties to the local community in International Falls. His experience as a biology teacher and his work in the park made him very knowledgeable about these three areas. As a teacher and a park employee he encouraged others to experience the wilderness through Voyageurs National Park. He supported education, research, community engagement, and government regulation as effective ways to protect and preserve wilderness areas. He talked about the spiritual connection he felt with the land and he said he had the best job in the world (Interview June 29, 2010).

Grim expressed strong beliefs about how the wilderness should be managed. He acknowledged some individuals may have to give up some or all of their perceived personal rights to preserve valuable wilderness resources for the benefit of the majority (Interview July 26, 2010). He talked about the need for government regulations and how important it is to enforce them (Interview July 19, 2010). He used water quality and the impact of damming as an example of the needs of the few weighted against the impact on many others (Interview July 26, 2010).

During his interviews Grim described strong connections to Voyageurs National Park. He was one of the first local people hired when the park staff arrived and the office opened in International Falls in 1973. Years later he described his work in the park as spiritually rewarding.

Well for me, being able to work in a National Park and what it stands for is a spiritual deal. I mean, there's just – there are days that I can go down the lake all by myself, going someplace to do some work where you know, you just sit back and you say, wow. Look at this. This is really something. You know, walking along the bare outcrops of rock out there, knowing something about it, and how it formed and all that stuff. I mean, that's all there because of part of the earth's process and we're able to contemplate those things. (Interview June 29, 2010)

Grim's narrative demonstrated his personal and professional dedication to Voyageurs National Park mission and the National Park system when he connected his personal feelings with his knowledge as a biologist. He talked about the responsibility he and other employees held to protect and maintain the ecosystems in the park through research and management (Interview June 29, 2010). He spoke sympathetically about local people who gave up their private holdings to create the park, but steadfastly said this real, personal loss endured by relatively few individuals benefits the greater good by creating opportunities for more people to experience and enjoy this natural setting, and to protect the wilderness area (Interview July 19, 2010). He described the visitor center parking lots packed with parked trucks and boat trailers in the summer as evidence people use the public boat ramps to access the park (Interview July 19, 2010). He described Voyageurs and other National Parks as belonging to the people, the taxpayers, and stressed that these areas are unique (Interview July 19, 2010). These common, shared areas are for everyone to enjoy, and Grim said they should be protected and valued.



Grim served the community as a member of the International Rainy Lake Board of Control (IRLBC) and was directly involved in regional water issues. Water is a powerful force in Voyageurs National Park. The park is approximately 218,000 acres, with 134,000 acres of land and 84,000 of water. With four major lakes and 26 interior lakes, 655 miles of shoreline and over 500 islands, water truly dominates the landscape.<sup>16</sup> Grim often talked about the impact people have on water and water quality, and the way water levels can influence the people living in the area as well as the park ecosystem. He described the rule curve, an international regulation developed to establish the water levels in the Rainy River drainage basin, as the result of 30 years of research and community input (Interview June 29, 2010). This collection of compromises attempts to balance community needs for hydroelectric power, the concerns of local landowners, the ecosystem in Voyageurs National Park and other systems in the Rainy River drainage basin, and to consider people downstream (Interview June 29, 2010). Grim said the park played an important role in developing research to support the contention that fluctuating water levels can have unintended consequences.

[T]his park was a very strong part of that. We got lots of graduate students and lots of professors and lots of people that came here and helped us to look at the problems that we thought we had, over time. And eventually the resource people that put this all together convinced the IJC [International Joint Commission]<sup>17</sup> to look at changing the rule curves. And they did all the studies and things to put it together. And they did, in 2000 rule curves changed... (Interview June 29, 2010).

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<sup>16</sup> Information found at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov), the Voyageurs National Park official web page.

<sup>17</sup> The International Joint Commission was created in 1938 to control emergency conditions related to water levels in water systems shared between the U.S. and Canada. The IJC created the International Rainy Lake Board of Control (IRLBC) in 1941. Information is available at the IRLBC official web page, [http://www.ijc.org/conseil\\_board/rainy\\_lake/rl\\_mandat.php?language=english](http://www.ijc.org/conseil_board/rainy_lake/rl_mandat.php?language=english)

Researchers and park employees worked to show these rule curve changes were effective. They have until 2015 to compare two rule curve systems and decide which elements to keep and which to eliminate or change. Grim has been part of this process. He described it as “very enlightening, educating...” (Interview June 29, 2010).

Grim appeared to act as a mediator for the local people and the National Park employees. He said he enjoyed many of the same recreational activities (fishing, boating, and hunting) as the families who have lived in the local communities for generations. He influenced generations of students as a high school teacher and eventually became a local representative working with government agencies to manage the local public lands and water resources. His appointment to the International Rainy Lake Board of Control (IRLBC) is a good example of the trusted place he holds with the local community (Interview June 29, 2010).

### Elements of Stewardship

This dissertation used Voyageurs National Park Service employees as the model and basis for the definition of professional steward. The decision was based on the official duties assigned National Park employees through legislation used to create the park<sup>18</sup> and the personal connections Grim described to the natural space defined as Voyageurs National Park. The National Park legislation also mandates the park employees try to establish public involvement and partnerships with local organizations, create educational and recreational opportunities for guests, and preserve historic and ecological elements included in the park’s jurisdiction. Key points Grim described regarding Voyageurs National Park stewardship and management are listed below.

- Duties and limits of National Park Service employees

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<sup>18</sup> National park regulation was established by the Wilderness Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-577).

- Public lands should be managed as public lands, not private holdings
- Public input should be encouraged
- History of the political pressure to preserve the natural space in Voyageurs National Park, and government efforts to encourage public involvement in environmental legislation

The Wilderness Act established the duties of the federal land-managing agencies, or the stewards, and the Congress. Stewards are asked to make recommendations about which lands qualified as candidates for wilderness, but their advice might or might not be supported by legislation. Congress has the power to bypass agency recommendations, placing the actions of the stewards responsible for actively managing the wilderness areas under the control of Congress. Grim mentioned similar circumstances in relation to his position with the International Joint Commission (IJC)<sup>19</sup> when he said “The role of the IJC is to listen and to inform. We, the IJC people, work for the governments of the United States and Canada” (Interview July 26, 2010).

While he was not as explicit, Grim made similar statements about his role as a Park Service employee and steward of public lands. He talked about the concept of the commons (Interview July 19, 2010). If the common lands are not protected, he said, eventually there will be nothing left, but if they are protected everyone can benefit. As a National Park employee, Grim was responsible for managing the public lands in Voyageurs National Park as described in the Final General Management

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<sup>19</sup> The International Rainy Lake Board of Control was created by the International Joint Commission.

Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.<sup>20</sup> The statement regulates how the public lands identified as Voyageurs National Park are managed.

Grim's position as a Voyageurs National Park employee and community member could help satisfy the public need for a trusted steward and community spokesperson. His scientific training, relationship to the park, and his status as a trusted community member made him an ideal member for the IRLBC. Pierce and Doerken (1976, p. 249) see value in citizen groups involved in water resource politics and water issues when advisory committees are open to general public involvement. They debate the merits of open recruiting from the local population versus assigning a qualified candidate to the position (Pierce and Doerken, 1976, p. 264). Grim was chosen by the community and the board, creating the best available representation. His position as a park researcher could also influence public trust in management decisions.

#### The Interview Process With Grim

During the first interview Grim described his upbringing and early interests in the natural environment. His narrative documented how he categorized the socializing elements he encountered while growing up and later as an adult. His word usage and personality traits were identified and linked to personal choices and actions Grim described, to establish context for his narratives.

In the second interview Grim was asked to describe his concepts of social influences and personal interests in relation to his connections with natural environments. This established social context in which his narrative was placed and identified related social action and agency (Fairclough 2003, p. 205 & 223). He was asked to describe In

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<sup>20</sup> See "A Guide to Volume 1" and "Summary" in The Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement and Visitor Use and Facilities Plan, Vol. 1. Voyageurs National Park. Koochiching and St. Louis Counties, Minnesota. (2001). United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

the second interview Grim was asked to describe his concepts of social influences and personal interests in relation to his connections with natural environments. This established social context in which his narrative was placed and identified related social action and agency (Fairclough 2003, p. 205 & 223). He was asked to describe personal experiences to support his statements about his relationships with nature and to describe early family events outdoors to determine how early socialization might have influenced him later, as an adult. Particular emphasis was placed on emotional connections, or contents, in his narratives, to determine if these events might have influenced him as an adult. He was encouraged to describe his personal relationship with the natural environment and to give examples to support his statements. He was asked to place value on natural resources and consider the needs of the environment in relation to the needs people have for natural resources.

The third interview asked Grim to define the terms “stewardship” and “environmental ethics” and to give examples. Grim was a professional steward, tasked with protecting the history, geographic features, and environment in Voyageurs National Park. He was a biologist and park researcher who had considered these questions often in relation to his work so his answers were particularly meaningful. His descriptions of negotiations between different groups, each placing demands on the environment, were well-developed and his examples supported his ideas. He talked about how he positioned himself in the community in relation to groups with competing interests, gave examples of different types of negotiation social groups have used to bargain for access to natural resources, and described the usual outcomes for the communities and the environment. The results of the interviews were compiled in the following data analysis chart. The

chart allowed relevant information to be separated from the remaining data and organized in a way that is easier to understand and for researchers to use.

#### Data Analysis Chart

Data collected from transcribed interviews with Grim were organized through coding. Each code was an irreducible word or short phrase used to represent a concept or idea. The interview process was designed to identify concepts or ideas connected to communication about the environment, used in relation to Voyageurs National Park, so the data analysis model was flexible to accommodate different types of results. Data coding concentrated on concepts Grim indicated through his word choices, repetition and emphasis were important to him, based on the stated goals for the research. Kleinman and Copp (1993, p. 33) state it is important for researchers to be in tune with their emotions so they will recognize clues to help understand the participants, and coding created the necessary type of environment. An overview of the code charts illustrates how each code grouping was drawn from previous ones through analysis and regrouping the codes. (See Figure 9)

Relevant words and phrases were identified and coded based on related meaning for the first step in the coding process. Meanings for each code were developed based on the words and phrases Grim used to describe the concepts included in each, and on the level of importance he indicated he placed on each. (See Figure 10)

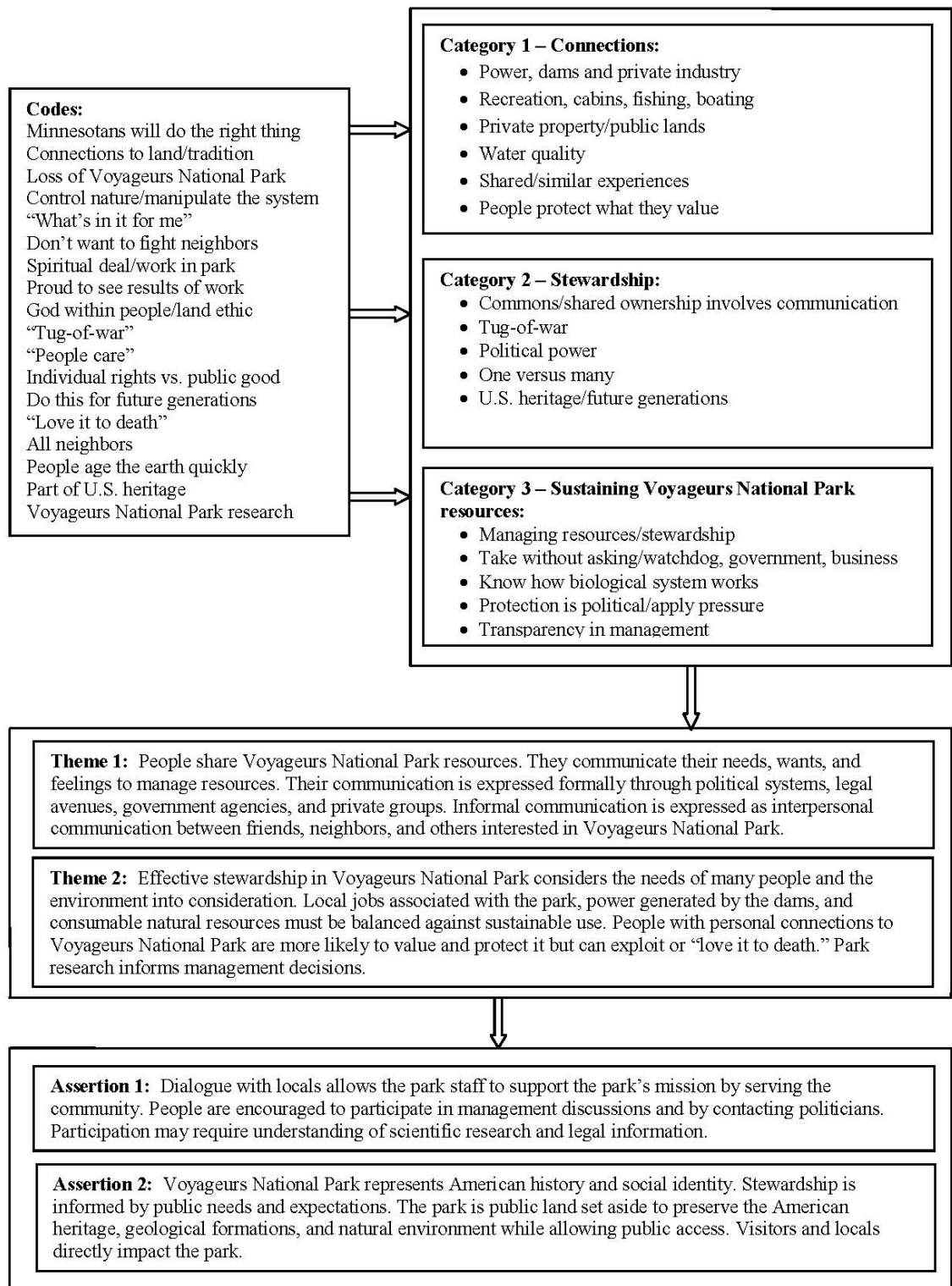


Figure 9: Overview of Grim Data Analysis Charts

Minnesotans will (ultimately) do the right thing	“Tug-of-war”
Connections to land/tradition	“People care”
Loss to Voyageurs National Park	Individual rights vs. public good
Control nature/manipulate the system	Do this for future generations
“What’s in it for me”	“Love it to death”
Don’t want to fight neighbors	All neighbors
Spiritual deal/work in park	People age the earth quickly
Proud to see results of work	Part of U.S. heritage
God within people/land ethics	Voyageurs National Park research/study and document

Figure 10: Initial Coded Data for Grim

The codes expressed three major issues: 1) the struggle between communities, business, and government agencies for control over distribution and use of the natural resources, 2) “traditional” connections to the land, or land use established by earlier residents and still practiced by some community members, and 3) consequences to the ecosystems in the Voyageurs National Park area. These issues impacted the way park administrators developed stewardship guidelines. They attempted to balance the needs of the ecosystem so the resources would be sustainable with those of local communities and businesses. Grim said he believes Minnesotans will ultimately do the right thing in regards to the environment because they have done so in the past, once they witness the consequences of their choices. He expressed pride and a sense of spiritual connection with his work. His research allowed him to protect and preserve part of the American heritage present and future generations can enjoy.

### *Categories*

Once the codes were organized they were examined to find related, underlying meaning. These groupings of coded data, or categories, reveal patterns by deleting,



condensing, and interpreting related codes to find consistent themes, expressed as the most comprehensive element articulated in that group. Organizing codes into categories clarified the types of communication Grim used to describe interactions between different social groups with connections to Voyageurs National Park. Final categories were condensed and expressed as part of a chart. (See Figure 11)

<p><b>Category 1</b>  <b>Connections between people and Voyageurs National Park:</b>  Power, dams and private industry  Recreation, cabins, fishing, boating  Private property  Public lands  Water quality/people create, correct, and protect  Shared/similar experiences  People protect what they value</p>	<p>Tug-of-war  Political power  One versus many  U.S. heritage/future generations</p>
<p><b>Category 2</b>  <b>Stewardship of Voyageurs National Park:</b>  Commons/shared ownership involves communication</p>	<p><b>Category 3</b>  <b>Sustaining Voyageurs National Park resources:</b>  Managing resources  Take without asking  Know how biological system works  Protection is political/apply pressure  Transparency in management  Stewardship  Groups – watchdogs, government, business</p>

Figure 11: Categories for Grim

The first category, connections between people and Voyageurs National Park, encompassed the way people utilized natural resources in and near the park. The codes in this category were associated with social concepts of power, control, personal freedom, and shared natural resources. It demonstrates the many connections park visitors and local people have with the park, and how the health and renewability of natural resources

depends on effective stewardship. Grim described cycles of misuse, alarm and regret, attempts to correct environmental problems, then efforts to protect the resource. Social influences stress individual freedom and autonomy, particularly regarding personal property, and create different types of value for users. When uses conflict Grim said the social mechanisms for resolving disagreements were not always effective and the continued welfare of the natural resources involved were not always considered.

Power, dams, and private industry were established in the area before the park was created. People also owned homes and recreational cabins there. It was relatively easy for people to access natural resources until overuse created conflict. Community members began sharing stories about the quality of their experiences with traditional natural resources. Local residents valued their recreational opportunities and lifestyle so when these were threatened they united to protect them. Issues related to water quality and water levels, which were artificially manipulated by power dams, were negotiated through public discussions and legislative action. Voyageurs National Park created access for more people but removed the kinds of access local communities had enjoyed by purchasing private land, taking control of state land, and imposing stricter limits on access to and use of natural resources.

The second category included codes related to stewardship of Voyageurs National Park. They expressed communication surrounding division of limited natural resources and preservation of the environment for future generations as part of the American heritage. Power was described as a “tug-of-war” between people with different interests. Grim used the term “commons” to refer to the concept of common land, open for all to use. He described the park as a commons area because it is public land, but use is

regulated to prevent abuse. His term, “One versus many,” can be interpreted as the needs of one user versus protecting the resources for sustainable use by many, such as the National Park Service taking control of local and state land to create a restricted National Park. In either case communication was required to negotiate shared ownership, or use, of public land and resources.

The third category was sustaining Voyageurs National Park resources. As a professional public steward, Grim expressed strong interest in these issues. He described effective stewardship as managing resources based on knowledge of the way the biological system worked so the resources could be utilized responsibly. He stressed sustainability as pivotal to meeting the public and environmental needs in the present and the future. Members of earlier societies in the Voyageurs National Park area sometimes took resources from the area without asking who or what might be impacted by the changes. Grim argued transparency in management and protection through political legislation were critical to protect increasingly threatened park ecosystems. Since politicians respond to pressure, he advocated for citizen, government, and business groups to act as watchdogs and advocates to protect the park and the local ecosystems.

### *Themes*

Two themes were created based on the categories. The themes developed from groupings of categories which were summarized based on a shared idea or concept. Grim was a government employee so his official communication was guided by laws and regulations, then transmitted to others through interpretive presentations, public meetings, and in writing. These types of communication methods were developed to allow message delivery to a large, diverse group of people distributed around Voyageurs National Park

and to others outside the local communities who were also interested in the park.

Broadcasting messages shifted the discourse from interpersonal and small group to public discourse. It also introduced issues surrounding political power. (See Figure 12)

The first theme described how people used communication to negotiate their shared use of natural resources. They used different types of distribution to convey messages based on the types of communication speakers used. Communication constructed for the political systems, legal avenues, and government agencies would be organized and distributed based on the mandates of each organization. The primary messages would have been conveyed verbally and in text. Groups and individuals would

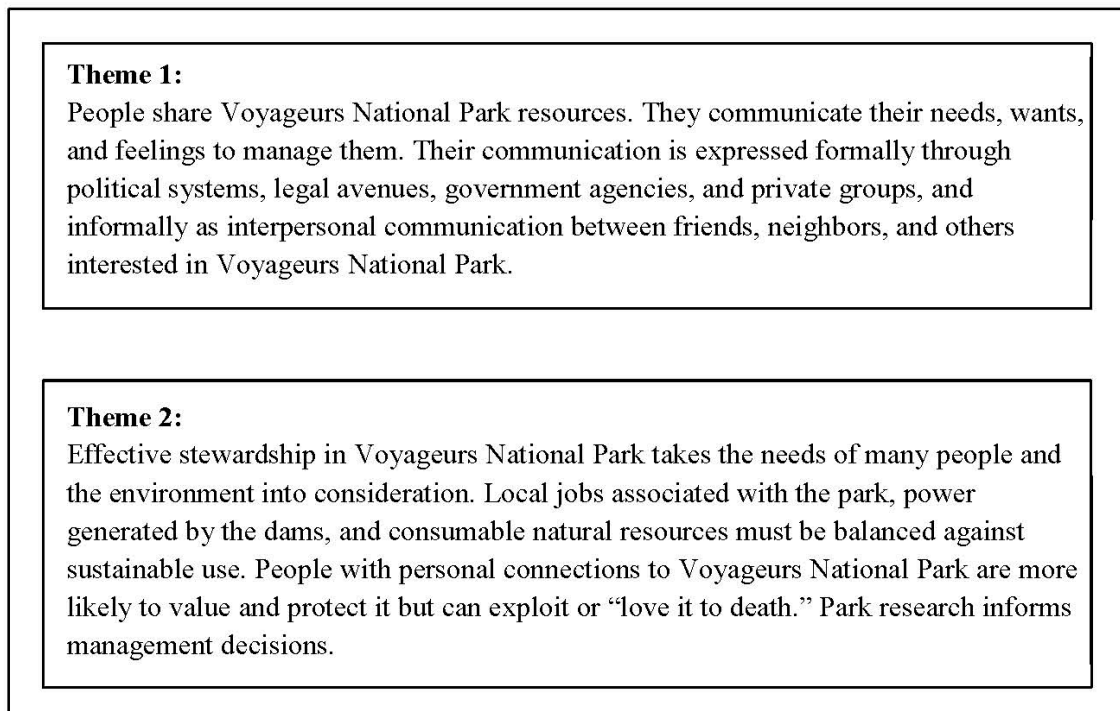


Figure 12: Themes for Grim

discuss issues in these messages and alter the written communication accordingly.<sup>21</sup>

Power was an important element in this communication because it carried the force of law. Interpersonal communication between interested individuals could be used to collect and share information, gauge reactions, and plan responses to proposed actions. In the Voyageurs National Park communities, local people had opportunities to communicate their concerns about natural resources and to join together to address issues they felt were important.

The second theme referred to the qualities Grim felt were necessary for effective stewardship. He described an interlocking system of priorities and involvement. Local community needs should be met through sustainable use. People with connections to Voyageurs National Park will protect it because they value it, but their value must be expressed in a sustainable way. Sustainability can be achieved through park research, conducted by scientists like Grim. The research should be used to inform management decisions and Grim indicated the public can influence those decisions through participation in local groups, as a park volunteer, or by petitioning government legislators. Today supporters need to know about research findings, the history of resource development, and be aware of legislation associated with an area if they want a particular outcome. They need to be dedicated to their cause before they will be willing to invest the time and energy a project needs to be effective (Scott, 2004, p. 151).

### *Assertions*

Two assertions were created based on the two themes listed above. An assertion is one or two concise statements deduced from analysis of the data to represent an

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<sup>21</sup> This interpretation confirms to guidelines established by the Voyageurs National Park Final General Management Plan (August, 2011).

overarching idea or concept. The first described communication between Voyageurs National Park staff and the local community. The second examined the ways National Park employees, particularly those affiliated with Voyageurs National Park, defined and acted on concepts of stewardship in relation to their professions. (See Figure 13)

These assertions work together to express conceptions of Voyageurs National Park and the surrounding communities. The first assertion looks to the present and near-term future by describing how people with different connections to the park might work together to benefit each other. The second assertion looks to future generations by protecting and preserving historical artifacts and natural resources.

The first assertion requires Voyageurs National Park managers to serve the community through local participation, therefore creating two challenges. The park staff

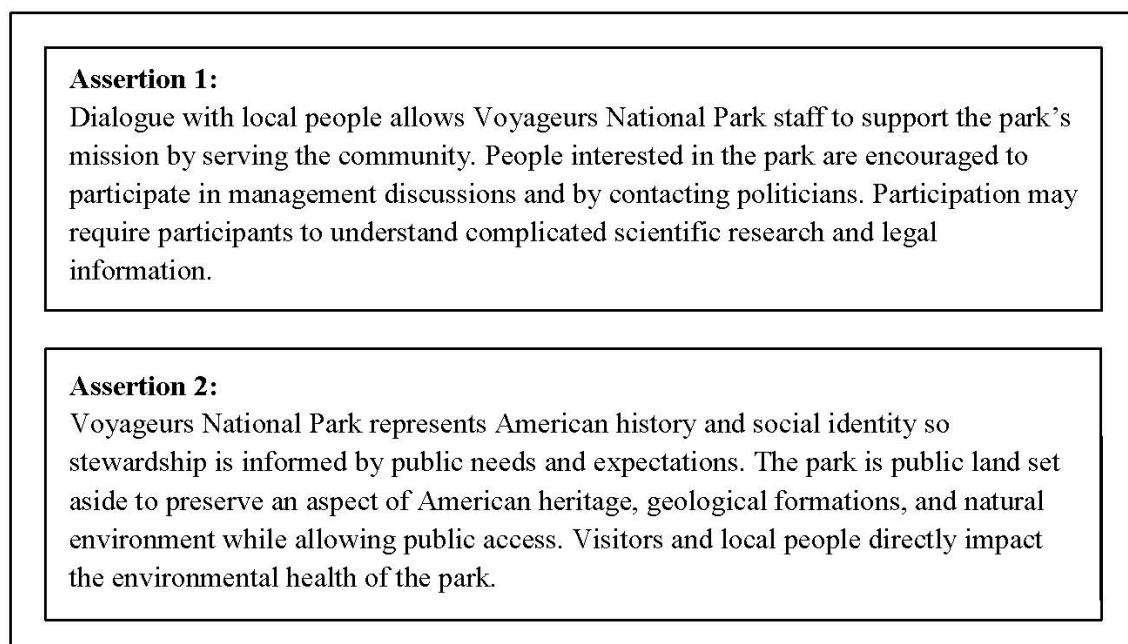


Figure 13: Assertions for Grim

need to be in touch with surrounding communities so they will be aware of changing social expectations and they need to encourage local participation in park management decisions. Original public interest was generated by the direct impact park legislation created for land owners, resort owners, and others with ties to the local natural resources. After the park was established and people had time to grow accustomed to new circumstances they were no longer motivated to participate. Eventually local communities grew to accept the park.

The most recent Voyageurs National Park management plan review established local communities (as represented by respondents) are generally satisfied with park management. This was good news for Voyageurs National Park managers but it also created problems. People who have few personal connections are not as motivated to become involved. Now the question might be, “Is there another effective way, other than conflict, to motivate people with connections to the park to work with the park staff and perhaps develop new potential from the opportunities the park creates?” Voyageurs National Park was supposed to provide opportunities to local communities in exchange for the loss of private property and access to natural resources. Other national parks have benefitted local communities by providing commercial opportunities so presumably Voyageurs National Park could be an asset to local communities as well. Those involved in the park could take the next step in responsible stewardship and create partnerships designed to serve the best interests of all.

The second assertion concerns the mandate to preserve American history and social identity in a meaningful way for future generations. The Voyageurs National Park staff will need cooperation from local communities and visitors to effectively preserve

the park's resources. Visitors and neighboring communities have an impact on conservation areas and can determine the success or failure of conservation policies by influencing local water and air quality, hunting and fishing practices, and other uses of natural environments. Therefore the best management policies have been ineffective if they are not supported by visitors and surrounding communities.

The Voyageurs National Park employees strive to enlist individual support through interpretation of the historic relics, geological features, and environmental components in Voyageurs National Park. The term "interpretation" is particularly important because it describes the type of communication the park employees use to encourage visitors to make personal connections with the park. The National Park Service defines interpretation as "a catalyst in creating opportunities for the audience to form their own intellectual and emotional connections with the meanings and significance inherent in the resource" (National Park Service, 2012). Interpretation developed as a specific communication style based on Freeman Tilden's principles and theories of interpretation.<sup>22</sup> Specially trained rangers work directly with park visitors. They encourage listeners to develop a sense of stewardship by making personal, emotional connections with the historical artifacts and natural resources in the park.

Interpretation attempts to create enjoyable experiences for visitors by offering information, orientation, and inspiration in meaningful ways. As Tilden (1957) said, "Heritage interpretation is an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information" (p. 48).

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<sup>22</sup> Tilden worked with the United State National Park Service. His 1957 book, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, was one of the first to establish the principles and theories of heritage interpretation.



Interpretive presentations need to be continuously updated to ensure the information meets public needs, and is presented in a format the public will understand and accept. Maintaining relevancy requires continuous public engagement with Voyageurs National Park.

## Conclusion

Evaluation of Grim's interviews revealed effective stewardship in Voyageurs National Park should include weighing present demands on the system with preservation for future generations, balancing access to natural resources that visitors and local communities want with the needs of the park ecosystems while encouraging citizen participation through different types of outreach strategies. Local community members and others with ties to Voyageurs National Park should voice their expectations to the park stewards. Visitors and local community members need to communicate regularly with park employees and their legislatures about local conservation efforts so Voyageurs National Park can continue to develop as a sustainable community and public asset as directed by the National Park Service mandates. Communication between the National Park Service and the local communities in the International Falls area was poorly managed when Voyageurs National Park was proposed and steps were taken to correct earlier mistakes once the park was established. While some improvements have been made the Voyageurs National Park Final General Management Plan Vol. 1 (2001) states the Voyageurs National Park supervisors would like to see more local participation in management and development decisions. These issues could be topics for future research: 1) why have earlier efforts to encourage participation been unsuccessful, 2) what can be done to create more participation, and 3) is the current state an appropriate outcome?

CHAPTER V

GLADYS COLE



Figure 14: Gladys Cole at her home in Kabetogama Township, taken by Norris Klesman on August 6, 2010.

Gladys Cole was asked to participate because she was married to a National Park employee for many years, she had volunteered or worked in a supporting role on National Park projects since she arrived in the International Falls, Minnesota, area and she continued to serve as an active volunteer and member of Voyageurs National Park citizen group after her husband, Glen, passed away. Her circumstances caused her to be

strategically positioned between the Voyageurs National Park employees and the civilian communities in the area. As spouse to a National Park employee she had insights into the National Park society without being a member. She was an active part of the local community as a stay-at-home mother, but she was not quite a local because she moved there with her husband who worked for the park. Her unique position as someone who was involved and engaged but not quite a full member of either group gave her an insider's perspective on the relationship between the two groups and how each interacted with the natural environment. Her interpersonal skills allowed her to make meaningful connections with people from Voyageurs National Park and people in the nearby communities.

Analyzing Cole's interviews revealed strong interpersonal relationships she deliberately crafted by supporting events, activities, and organizations important to those she cared about. This included her connections with Voyageurs National Park. Cole said she was interested in the park and the natural environment because she cared for people who were interested in these things. She said she had no interest in wildlife before she met Glen or while she worked with and supported Voyageurs National Park after her husband passed away. She continued to volunteer because she was drawn to the people who work for the park rather than the place. Her "second hand" emotional connections to nature offer potential opportunities to reach out to relatively untapped audiences.

National parks, historic places, and other public wilderness areas are supported by tax dollars so the federal government has invested a great deal of time and money in public outreach and education. National Park employees encourage the public to make personal connections with their public lands. Most of the work is directed toward

developing direct emotional connections between individuals and public places but Cole's discourse presents another possibility. People who are not naturally inclined to enjoy wilderness recreation could become involved in environmental issues through their connection with people they care about who do enjoy the outdoors.

While Cole did not express particular personal interest in outdoor recreation she was involved through her association with Voyageurs National Park and her family. Outdoor recreation is popular in Minnesota so it was possible to evaluate Cole's activities in relation to the "average" Minnesotan for indications of social influence. A Minnesota Department of Natural Resources study shows decrease in most outdoor activities across ten year projections from 2004 until 2014. (See Table 1) The forecast examines the majority of adult Minnesotans annual outdoor recreation time in 2004. Minnesota-specific activities occupied just over one-third of total recreation time. People investing this much time and energy in an activity they enjoy would presumably form strong personal bonds with the areas where they recreate. The figures demonstrate the social influences Cole experienced as a Minnesotan, married to a National Park researcher.

The National Park Service will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2016. It was created to preserve the history and the best of the land for future generations. The founders and the leaders of later generations of Americans compared the untamed landscape to the grandeur of the cathedrals and castles in the Old World of Europe. As the National Park Service enters a second century of stewardship, their stated purpose is to recommit to the exemplary stewardship and public enjoyment of the public lands under their care.<sup>23</sup> The first item on the agenda is connecting people to parks in a way that "helps communities

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<sup>23</sup> The Mission, Purpose, and Significance statement in the General Management Plan (August 2001) quotes four main purposes as outlined by its legislation.

protect what is special to them, highlight their history, and retain or rebuild their economic and environmental sustainability.”<sup>24</sup> Cole’s description of her relationship with National Park stewards might offer insight on ways to effectively connect Park Service professionals with community volunteers and organizations.

### Introduction to Gladys Cole

Gladys Cole was interviewed three times: on August 6, August 11, and August 14, 2010. The questions in the interview process were developed to create insights on the central research question, “How do research participants’ interested in the natural ecosystems in and surrounding Voyageurs National Park describe stewardship of the land with others in their community, particularly those from different backgrounds?” Cole’s narrative also addressed elements in the subquestions: 1) what kinds of discourse do the study participants use to negotiate management of shared natural resources, 2) how do the participants define the terms “environmental ethics” and “stewardship,” and 3) how do they place value on their experiences in the wilderness? Cole was in a unique position in relation to Voyageurs National Park. She engaged in communication regarding the ecosystems in the park as a volunteer, she shared dialogue with the park stewards through her relationship with her husband, his professional associates and their families, and she communicated with the local community members as a fellow community member. Her multiple perspectives allowed her to contribute narratives about the ways different social groups described their interests in the local ecosystems and the interactions she observed between individuals.

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<sup>24</sup> Retrieved from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior web site: [www.nps.gov/calltoaction](http://www.nps.gov/calltoaction)

Cole was born<sup>25</sup> on her father's homestead near Brockway, Montana in McCone County. The youngest of three children, she grew up on a very small farm. She said she lists Brockway as her birthplace because "that was the post office" (Interview August 6, 2010). She spent her childhood playing outdoors, cutting out paper dolls, and playing games. When the children were old enough to go to school the family moved to Brockway for the school year and returned to the farm in the summer to take care of the garden. (Interview August 6, 2010)

Cole describes her childhood as simple but said the family never lacked basic needs. She said they did not have a telephone but they always had a radio. She thinks now they were in a lower income bracket but she and her siblings had no idea they were poor when they were growing up. Her parents planted a garden every year and they always had chickens, a few beef cattle, and a milk cow. After World War II her father bought beef cattle to fatten and sell, but otherwise her parents raised wheat, oats, and flax on their farm. The family churned butter, canned vegetables, and butchered their own meat. She describes her family as fortunate because they did not suffer from illnesses or accidents on the farm. (Interview August 6, 2010)

Cole said her mother taught school before she married Cole's father and she continued to teach during the first years of marriage, with a break during World War II, when most young people were in the service. Cole's mother would go to a rural school where she taught and the children would stay in town with their father, who worked as the school janitor during the winter. Her mother joined the family on weekends, until she began teaching in Brockway and Circle, and the family was able to move back together.

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<sup>25</sup> Cole seems to have been born in the 1930s.

Cole said, "...[I]t seemed like we moved a heck of a lot when we went back and forth but it worked out" (Interview August 6, 2010).

Cole said her father's parents lived in Norway, but his grandparents and several siblings lived in the U.S. She said her family members settled in communities with other settlers from Norway, probably to stay in their comfort zone. Her mother's family was from Bohemia and family members often visited the United States. When she moved to Minnesota with her husband, Glen, Cole said she got in touch with her father's relatives. It was just something she wanted to do. (Interview August 6, 2010)

Cole finished high school in Circle (the school at Brockway closed after her junior year) so she graduated from high school with an unfamiliar class of students. She went to college at Bozeman, Montana, and worked there for several years after graduation. Cole went to what she describes as "...an agricultural college in Bozeman," probably Montana State University. She majored in business, based on her quest for what she calls "life's work." She was encouraged by the example set by her mother, who had continued to attend summer school while she was teaching and received her bachelor's degree in education in the 1960s. She also said she was not interested in teaching or home economics, but the college did offer a degree in commercial science, so this was the major she chose. She earned a teaching degree and taught for a few years, but she said it was not her first choice. She preferred office work. (Interview August 6, 2010)

After graduation Cole said she "wandered along and did a little teaching did a little work here and there but you know that's the way it goes" (Interview August 6, 2010). She said she went to Spokane, Washington, and worked there for a few years, then decided to return to Montana to try teaching. She taught high school typing, shorthand,

bookkeeping, and other general business classes there for several years. Then she met and married Glen, who was finishing his master's degree in wildlife management. Glen went on to work for Montana Fish and Game. Cole said Glen also worked for the National Park Service at Glacier for two summers when he was a student. (Interview August 6, 2010)

Cole said she continued to teach for several years after she and Glen were married but quit when their two daughters were born. The family moved to Grand Teton when Glen took a Park Service job there. The oldest daughter, Patty, was two years old at the time. Brenda, the youngest, was born in Jackson, Wyoming, while Glen Cole was still working at Grand Teton National Park. They had been at the park for five years when Glen accepted a job at Yellowstone National Park, about 50 miles away. (Interview August 6, 2010)

Cole said the move to Yellowstone was easy "because of the park housing in both places and a very cordial atmosphere when we went there" (Interview August 6, 2010). The park employees lived, worked, shopped, and their children went to school in a community build and supplied by the National Park Service. Cole said, "You did everything there because there was no alternative...everyone worked for the park or for a concessioner that lived there" (Interview August 6, 2010). It was different in Jackson, Cole said. There employees and their families used local services because it was a bigger community. (Interview August 6, 2010)

The residents lived physically close together too. The houses and buildings were organized as if they were part of a city, with a small footprint. But the community functioned comfortably, Cole said. Everyone had the park as a common interest. The men



worked together and the women did too, taking care of their families. Cole learned a lot about ecosystems and nature by listening to her husband and watching his work. "...[I]t was just kind of like osmosis you know. It just kind of soaks in" (Interview August 6, 2010). She said living in a national park, surrounded by National Park employees, made her "much more aware of it [nature] and the relationship between animals [in the park] as opposed to ... the hunting that was typical outside" (Interview August 6, 2010).

Residents at Yellowstone had to make their own social life, Cole said, but it worked well because it was "a very compatible group" (Interview August 6, 2010). She described an employee association much like the one they have at Voyageurs National Park today and members would organize socials. Volunteers worked through a program that allowed them to teach students swimming in the spring and skiing in the winter. There were a lot of other outdoor events too, such as hiking and camping. Cole said she and other parents in the community helped out with the children's programs. (Interview August 6, 2010)

Cole described Yellowstone National Park as "infinitely interesting because it attracted so many scientists...[P]eople were interested in coming there for research...[Y]ou also had ... the Secretary of the Interior and the President coming... [I]t isn't like Voyageurs where you are lucky if the regional director comes" (Interview August 6, 2010). She said that made Yellowstone "...a fun place to be because it ... widened your knowledge of people in politics..." (Interview August 6, 2010).

Cole said her husband, Glen Cole, was lured to a new position at Voyageurs National Park in the International Falls, Minnesota area by a National Park manager<sup>26</sup> who knew Glen had worked with caribou and who asked him to start a program to

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<sup>26</sup> Cole said she thinks it was the Midwest regional director (Interview August 6, 2010).

reintroduce them to the area. Cole describes the offer as “the bait at the end of the hook” (Interview August 6, 2010). She said there are records that show the last caribou in the Voyageurs National Park area was shot in 1924 or 1934, she was not sure. Unfortunately the proposal to reintroduce caribou was never acted on because, Cole said, there was “[a] lot of political opposition. Minnesota didn’t like it. Farmers [asked]...what would they do if ... the caribou got out of the park?” (Interview August 6, 2010)

When they arrived at the new park Cole said there were only three or four employees there and the park was only a few years old. She describes it as “an interesting time when we were there when the land acquisition had...caused some contention in the area and in the town and a lot of opposition from the local people” (Interview August 6, 2010). She said the push to create Voyageurs National Park came from people living outside the area who would come for the recreational opportunities (Interview August 6, 2010). Her statement identified one source of conflict surrounding Voyageurs National Park. She said local people often felt they were asked to give up access to their property and recreational sources to accommodate visitors to the area when they did not see how they could gain any personal benefit.

When the Cole family arrived in International Falls there was no National Park community supporting Voyageurs National Park as there had been at Yellowstone and Grand Teton so the Cole family purchased a beautiful home on the shore in Kabetogama Township. There were more young families in the area then than there are now, Cole said, and just as many resorts as there are today.<sup>27</sup> The girls took the bus to school in Orr,

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<sup>27</sup> The shoreline of Rainy Lake runs along Kabetogama Township, and there are small, mom-and-pop resorts lining the waterfront.

Minnesota, which was the closest school in St. Louis County.<sup>28</sup> Cole said there were a lot of children their age in the area. (Interview August 6, 2010)

Cole said moving to a new area was probably harder on her and the little girls than it was for her husband. She did not know they were walking into a hotbed of controversy between the local people and the National Park Service. She said, “You know you sit down and somebody would say, ‘well do you want a resort?’ No, my husband works for the Park Service” (Interview August 6, 2010). However, she also said no one seemed to take it out on her and the children. After she revealed she was there because her husband worked for the Park Service, she said the speaker would usually say, “Oh well, come and sit down” (Interview August 6, 2010). A neighbor two doors down was the first to come and welcome them. Cole said, “They belonged to the church and I went there with the single lady who lived next door...and we got to be good friends” (Interview August 6, 2010).

The staff supporting Voyageurs National Park was small in the beginning but it grew during the years Cole was there. Once the children were grown Cole said she wanted something to do so when the newly organized Lake States book store<sup>29</sup> was formed she took a job as treasurer for several years and then worked as the business manager. She said she enjoyed her associations with Voyageurs National Park and she described life as the wife of a National Park employee as very interesting because, “...there was always research going on” (Interview August 6, 2010).

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<sup>28</sup> Voyageurs National Park extends across two counties. Most of the park is in Kabetogama County. The southeastern part is in St. Louis County.

<sup>29</sup> Lake States was the commissary contracted to run the gift shops at the three Voyageurs National Park visitor centers.

Lee Grim you know always had the eagles and there ... was a young gal that did a loon net and grade study and then the kids that did the beaver and John Fisher was here and did, I think bears and wolves. Glen would fly with the park pilot and census moose in the winter time... (Interview August 6, 2010)

She said her husband, "...was always busy writing something" (Interview August 6, 2010). Glen Cole retired from the National Park Service in 1987.

Well, I found out after Glen retired that when we bought this place he decided this is where he wanted to retire. And so we just stayed. See I always thought we would go back to Montana because that was my home. Well of course his home is Wisconsin and this is close. And the water was very appealing for him. (Interview August 6, 2010)

The couple traveled to the Gulf Coast, went on short canoe and ski trips, and generally enjoyed their time together. Cole said they spent a lot of time on the lake. Glen liked to fish and they both enjoyed short canoe trips.

After her husband passed away Cole said she bought a little condo near one of her daughters' homes in Richmond but continued to live in Kabetogama Township. As the years passed she said it became challenging to take care of the place. At the time of these interviews she said she only lived there in the summer. The rest of the year she lived near her daughter. She was active in her new community and said she was a member of the recreation center and the church where she said she has met "some very compatible

people” (Interview August 14, 2010). Cole was clearly moving away from her old home and toward a new life near her children and grandchildren.<sup>30</sup>

Well right now I’m still here but I found myself spending fewer weeks up here in the summer time each year and I look forward to selling this place. You know when the market will cooperate then I’ll just stay in Richmond year ‘round. And the kids say well you sell your house you’ll have enough money to come up and vacation here or wherever you want to. (Interview August 14, 2010)

#### Personal Connection to the Environment

The relationship Cole described with the natural environment is distinctive because she said she was motivated by the value she placed on relationships with others. Her narrative described devoting considerable amounts of time and energy throughout her life to support environmental issues because she cared about the people who care about the environment. Her primary connection was through her family. Her husband, Glen Cole, graduated with a Masters degree in wildlife management and worked for Montana Fish and Game for several years before he accepted a position with the National Park Service (Interview August 6, 2010). While Gladys Cole was raised on a farm in a rural area she said she was not interested in wilderness or nature until she met Glen (Interview August 6, 2010). When asked if she was drawn to the fact he was interested in wildlife or to the man, Cole said, “Oh I think it was probably just the person” (Interview August 6, 2010). Later in the interview she repeated that she was not interested in wilderness until she met Glen. Cole said their two daughters were also interested in natural wilderness areas. As they were growing up they had many opportunities to canoe,

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<sup>30</sup> Cole put the house up for sale in the summer of 2010.

ski, fish, picnic, hike, and generally enjoy recreational opportunities in wilderness areas.  
(Interview August 6, 2010)

Once she was introduced to wildlife management, wilderness protection, and recreational opportunities, Cole seemed to adapt to wilderness recreation. She described fishing and canoeing with Glen, volunteering to teach swimming and skiing to children when her girls were in school, planting trees with other volunteers, and generally leading an active outdoor life with her family, friends, and Glen's coworkers and their families. She also talked about the National Park employees and specialists who came to conduct specific research projects at the national parks where Glen was stationed, and the important visitors who would come to the bigger parks. She said the research was interesting and visits from important National Park managers were exciting, but in each instance she would briefly describe the research, then describe in detail the person who conducted the research. She described Glen's coworkers as "park family" and said they were very supportive of each other. (Interview August 11, 2010) She was still in touch with or knew about these people and she described in detail where they were and what they were doing.

Cole's description of the researchers was similar to her account of her volunteer work with the school children.

"...[I]t was a reservation where we lived [at Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park] and it was up to the people in the community to guide the kids and do things... [T]he school was very cooperative, taking trips when that was possible. Field trips and that sort of thing, making it possible for the kids

to get out and go skiing in the winter and take their swim lessons in the spring.

(Interview August 11, 2010)

Cole said the family probably got outdoors more often because it was the norm. She said, "...[T]here were just a lot of people that were hikers and skiers and they encouraged you to go. Canoeing and that sort of thing. ...[T]hey ...led the programs that made that possible." (Interview August 11, 2010)

### Cole's Connection to Voyageurs National Park

Initially Gladys Cole was chosen as a key participant to this study because she was a member of the Friends of Voyageurs National Park,<sup>31</sup> a nonprofit group organized to support the mission of the park and the park employees, and she volunteered one day a week in the Voyageurs National Park library. When her interviews were analyzed the data revealed different kinds of personal connections to the park environment than anticipated. Her connections to the park were relevant to the study based on the research question and subquestions, and interesting based on the motivations she described for her actions. She did not talk about taking advantage of recreational opportunities other than trips with her family but she seemed to be one of the most active, engaged volunteers at Voyageurs National Park. Cole also represented stay-at-home housewives and mothers living in the Voyageurs National Park area when the park was created in 1975. This group is presumed to be represented in the public hearings but documented accounts of

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<sup>31</sup> Friends of Voyageurs National Park was organized to sponsor outreach that supports natural, historic and educational activities at the park and on special projects to address what members and Voyageurs National Park representatives consider to be critical needs of the park. The group is supported by member dues and a \$25,000 gift managed by the National Park Foundation. The National Park Foundation was established by an Act of Congress in 1967 as a community foundation to serve national parks and their partners. (Friends of Voyageurs National Park, accessed at <http://www.nps.gov/voya/supportyourpark/upload/Fund%20Brochure.pdf> on Dec. 19, 2011)

participants show most of the written and public dialogue involved men. Usually women were represented by a family member or as a member of a group, such as Friends of Voyageurs National Park and the Voyageurs National Park Association, after the park was created. In her discourse Cole said she was “a typical housewife” who “stayed at home” (Interview August 11, 2010) and she described working as a community volunteer from the time her children entered school.<sup>32</sup> During the interview process she said she had stronger connections and felt most comfortable working with the Park Service than taking a position in the International Falls Community (Interview August 6, 2010).<sup>33</sup>

Cole identified with people who cared about environmental issues, primarily those related to the National Park Service, and her empathy allowed her to develop a particular kind of relationship with stewards tasked with managing Voyageurs National Park. Like others closely associated with but not officially connected to the Park Service, she had a unique perspective on the stewards and the way they functioned as a group.

This analysis of Cole’s discourse will demonstrate how she identified herself in interactions with primary cultural groups in her life: the local community at International Falls, her perceptions of the National Park employees and their reactions to their work, and the relationship between National Park employees and the local community in International Falls.

### Definition of Public Steward

Cole’s descriptions of National Park employees highlighted similarities and differences she described between those working at the three national parks with which

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<sup>32</sup> Cole talked about working as a volunteer at Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. There she participated in volunteer programs to create opportunities for the school children and she worked with the employees or organized socials. (Interview August 6, 2010).

<sup>33</sup> Her exact words were, “I fit in” (Interview August 11, 2010).



she associated. She also described important distinctions between the two older, more isolated, well-established National Parks and Voyageurs National Park which was a new park when her family moved there. Her observations are important to this study. The primary question, 1) how do people who are interested in the natural environment where they live use discourse to negotiate stewardship of the land with others in their community, particularly those from different cultures, and a secondary question, 2) how do the participants define the terms “environmental ethics” and “stewardship,” are directly or indirectly connected to the nature of stewardship in Voyageurs National Park and the National Park System. National Park employees are recognized in this dissertation as professional stewards of the public lands because they follow standards mandated by federal and state laws. Important, related interests and traits are used to define the term stewardship in relation to these government stewards.

Cole’s discourse identified several key points she said make the “park family” cohesive as a community and distinct from other, civilian communities, particularly International Falls. These points are:

- Sense of family, similar to a military base, which she called the “park family”
  - Group dedication to their work as stewards of public lands
  - Members supported each other so the work necessary for the National Park mission could be successfully completed
- Research was very important and the opportunity to conduct and/or learn about the research drew smart, well-educated, powerful people to work for the National Parks

- Park researchers and employees could recommend actions based on their research, but the government leaders would make the final decision and the National Park Service employees would carry out those decisions

Cole said the qualities she observed in the National Park Service employees created a cohesive group of effective public land stewards. However, these traits could also create psychological distance between the Park Service professionals and the local community. This issue will be examined later. First it seems appropriate to look at what makes the National Park Service a “park family.” Earlier in this dissertation the term “park family” was used in connection with the discourse Cole used to show the qualities National Park supervisors looked for in employees. She theorized these qualities also affected the kinds of social relationships people in the National Park communities developed, particularly in the isolated communities of Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks but also in Voyageurs National Park (Interview August 11, 2010).

Cole’s dialogue used the terms “communities were welcoming,” “you had a place,” and “everyone was on the same level” to describe the societies she experienced while living in National Park communities at Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. Her narrative described similar, supportive relationships between Voyageurs National Park employees. (Interview August 11, 2010)

They were there [working for the National Park Service] because they wanted to be ... [The work was] meaningful in their careers... [T]hey had made choices to educate themselves in colleges and the people in maintenance or the other divisions all worked together to support the programs that the park introduced or

changed. I know that they were always interested always helpful if Glen's research department needed you know an extra hand or anything they would always kept up with what was going on. (Interview August 11, 2010)

The social connections Cole described in National Park communities helped shape the ways employees defined their roles as professional stewards. She also described the stewardship roles Glen held with Montana Fish and Game, and she compared the two positions. Cole believed the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service developed different definitions of public land stewardship in the U.S. because they demonstrate variations between types of stewardship used to manage public lands. Both are directed by the Department of the Interior but each is regulated by different sets of legislation. Both were created to protect the nation's wealth of natural resources before they were overwhelmed by the westward expansion, which brought developing industry and farming, and increasing populations. (See Appendix A)

Cole described witnessing radical changes in the way the National Park Service began managing the public land under their care.

Of course in years past they shot all the wolves... [Then they] just reached that point in knowledge and – and you know the attitude or how their interest in those things just flipped over. They quit feeding the bears, took out the garbage dumps... That all happened in a few years really. And the catch and release fishing you know both things. (Interview August 6, 2010)

In the second interview Cole described the impact created by the policy change and credits the shift from managing natural resources to restoring them.

[W]hen he [Glen] worked for Montana [Fish and Wildlife] that was [about] the hunting and fishing, you know they managed, wildlife...with different goals than when he worked for the National Park Service. That was preservation or restoration and it was still gathering information about these animals and the ecosystem. But that was all very much new to me... That was the goal then [for Fish and Wildlife] to have a sustainable harvest... [For the National Park Service] I would say [the goal was] restoration of a natural system. Because they had done a lot of managing in the park in past years from killing all the wolves, way back in the nineteen-twenties and thirties and feeding the bears and trapping and transplanting the elk and planting fish. Which I don't know that any of those that exist today... (Interview August 11, 2010)

In this part of the interview Cole described the National Park Service as an organization with a strong sense of purpose, made up of well-educated, dedicated people. She said members worked hard on their own projects and helped each other to ensure they effectively supported the National Park mission.

#### Cole's Relationship with the Local Community

One of Cole's great talents seemed to be her ability to adapt, adjust, and make personal connections with others. She described deliberately reaching out to others, particularly through her affiliation with her church and, when her daughters were still at home, by volunteering with their schools. She also described making connections with

her neighbors and with her husband's coworkers. Her people skills and what appear to be her sincere interests in others allowed her to view the same situation from several perspectives and create a well developed overview of the circumstances in which a particular narrative was created.

Cole seemed to have developed close, personal relationships with locals and people affiliated with the National Park Service but her responses to interview questions used words and phrases that set her apart from both these groups. Key points are:

- Do the best you can with what you have
- Adapt, but don't compromise on important issues
- People matter more than place
- Independence comes from knowing how to take care of yourself

Cole said she was never ostracized for her association with Voyageurs National Park and she briefly mentioned the locals were not happy about the way the National Park Service acquired private land to create the park. She said, "[T]hey didn't seem to carry it over into a personal position with me anyway. Or else I just ignored it. I'm not gunna deal with it you know? [My attitude was], you change I'm not going to."

(Interview August 11, 2010) This was a bold statement from a woman who described herself as conforming. It seems to reflect the tension she must have felt between her "park family" and the local community members. (Interview August 11, 2010)

Cole's stories illustrated how much she seemed to enjoy developing personal connections to others. Despite the friendships she developed, Cole does not seem to have grown attached to the International Falls area. She says she never felt drawn to the

community so she did not look for a career or a leadership role there (Interview August 14, 2010). She worked for Lake States instead because the position allowed her to work with people from Voyageurs National Park, most of whom she already knew (Interview August 6, 2010).

Cole often developed her narrative as if she were a third party observing the actions of others in the International Falls community. She referred to the locals as “they” even though she lived in the area for at least 20 years. She described herself as an actor in the drama and spoke as if her affiliations were with Voyageurs National Park but she still framed her narrative in a way that set her apart from the National Park community too. Her allegiance seems to have been with her family and friends, no matter where they were from or what other connections they might have. (Interview August 11, 2010)

#### Cole’s Description of the Local Community

For this dissertation, the “local community” is defined as community bordering Voyageurs National Park. The local communities associated with Voyageurs National Park cover a large geographic area because the park is large and many communities of various sizes can be found along the boundaries. The park is accessed at four points along U.S. Highway 53. The Ash River Trail leads to the Ash River Visitor Center, County Road 122 runs through Kabetogama Township to the Kabetogama Visitor Center, Minnesota Highway 11 runs through International Falls to the Rainy Lake Visitor Center, and Orr Township serves as the gateway to Crane Lake, which is connected to the park waterways.<sup>34</sup> Cole lived in Kabetogama Township, her children went to school in Orr, and Glen worked in the Voyageurs National Park Headquarters in International Falls.

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<sup>34</sup> A quick online search for Gateway communities to Voyageurs National Park located web pages for International Falls and Kabetogama, subtitled “Gateway to Voyageurs National Park.” Both sites are owned and maintained by onthelake.net, which looks like a vacation destination business.

Therefore, for this dissertation, the local community will include these three communities and the people living near enough to use the community services, such as water, sewer, shops or schools.

Cole described the local communities, the general attitudes and behaviors she experienced, and she gave detailed descriptions of her friends and neighbors. Her main points are listed below.

- The people were very independent and the community was unique
- Most community members resisted change, particularly the older ones
- Hunting and fishing were important, particularly to the old “pioneers”

Cole described moving to Kabetogama Township in 1976, when the park was only a year old. She described the “very independent, unique community” living there. She said, “The people ... who have lived here and moved into this country have always been very independent. Individualistic. Some of ‘em come up here to be by themselves.” (Interview August 6, 2010) Cole’s words and tone sounded sympathetic to the local community and her narrative reflected her ability to empathize with others.

I always felt they were ... the pioneers... [A] lot of the older people, they’d come here with their parents or were born here many years ago and they liked it the way it was. They were always independent... I think that many of them as children and young families had lived off the land and they were afraid that was gunna disappear. (Interview August 11, 2010)

Cole indicated local people were particularly concerned about losing their access to hunting and fishing, even though they no longer depended on hunting as a food source. She did say hunting and fishing was an important part of the homestead history. Hunting and fishing shifted from subsistence to recreation for the local people but Cole said they still seemed compelled to catch at or above the legal limit, even if they might not need the resource. She said, "I think they don't even consider... what they're doing or why they're doing it. If somebody says you can have this many then you have to have to have that many." (Interview August 14, 2010)

Local concern over issues like access to hunting and fishing areas could explain why people separated their feelings for the National Park Service from the Voyageurs National Park employees. Cole said local people liked the people who worked for the park but they didn't like Voyageurs National Park (Interview August 11, 2010). When she asked local residents if they objected to Voyageurs National Park or to national parks in general they would say no, they did not object to national parks. Minnesota has a good system of state parks (Interview August 6, 2010) so there is evidence the people appreciate public land and are willing to support it.<sup>35</sup>

Cole's descriptions of the discussions surrounding Voyageurs National Park and the employees indicate possible causes for conflict between local community members and the National Park authorities. Local people felt they were losing tax dollars, local businesses, access to power and timber, and access to hunting and fishing, which was a valuable part of their lifestyle. They felt park officials were forcing them to change in ways that made them uncomfortable, probably because they did not trust the federal government to safeguard the welfare of the local communities around Voyageurs

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<sup>35</sup> Leland Grim also mentioned Minnesotans traditionally support state and local parks, and water quality.



National Park. Their distrust could have been based on the perception that their politicians bowed to political pressure from outside interest groups and reallocated their land to create the park (Searle, 1977).

Cole illustrated the communication gap between Voyageurs National Park and the local community when she described Glen's conversation about water quality with a local community member.

I can remember him [Glen] sitting here and talking to people and trying to explain to him, to this one person how the contaminants in the water built up from one point to you know the – the – the top of the food chain... I don't know that he ever convinced this guy that he was right but Glen had the information to give him.

(Interview August 11, 2010)

It would have been difficult for Cole and others associated with Voyageurs National Park to form close, personal relationships with their neighbors. Cole said the park symbolized large, bureaucratic institutions to the local people, and they believed it threatened their way of life. Many of them felt park supporters were "outsiders" trying to establish an expensive recreational area in their backyards. Before the first official park proposal was released to the public in 1964, Governor Rolvaag and Congressman Blatnik received messages from local residents who strongly opposed the proposed park, including Jeno Paulucci, a multimillionaire who owned an expensive forest lodge and retreat on the Kabetogama Peninsula. An aggressive, hard-hitting businessman, Paulucci's messages to his representatives attacked "bureaucrats from Washington, the

government land grabbers, and the sleeping bag enthusiasts who already had plenty of territory in the BWCA” (Jeno Paulucci to Governor Karl Rolvaag, 17 September 1964).

### Local Communities and National Parks

After her marriage Cole moved with her husband to different National Park Service communities. Her position as the spouse of a National Park employee, and a wife and mother of two school age daughters, gave her an excellent opportunity to see how the community and the government representatives interacted with each other, and to observe how they developed environmental management. Her narrative included descriptions of the Voyageurs National Park employees and the research they developed, the environmental policies used to manage the national parks, and the complicated relationship between the National Park employees, the National Park Service, and local residents.

Cole observed several important issues connected to the relationship between the local community members and the National Park Service, and she described complications in their relationships that can still be seen today. These communication issues impact the way the public and the National Park Service develop long term management plans for Voyageurs National Park.

- There has been local opposition to Voyageurs National Park since it was proposed
- “Taking” private land to create the park solidified local resentment
- Voyageurs National Park managers would like to develop an effective collaborative relationship with local communities since the park was signed into legislation

- Local people did not like the changes the park created and seemed to resist accepting anything connected to the park, including information and assistance

Local distrust of the National Park Service began before land transfers became an issue, but Cole's discourse highlighted the impact "the taking" had on local citizens' relationship with Voyageurs National Park. She also identified general mistrust of the government and "a lot of misunderstanding, stories [that] thrive with no basis" (Interview August 11, 2010) as part of the problem. She said some National "Park policies were carried out in a very heavy-handed manner" which did not endear the park to the locals. Probably the most objectionable policy involved land acquisition. Cole said, "...[T]hey (the property owners) were told they had to sell I think" (Interview August 11, 2010).

[A]ll of this I've gotten second hand [from] the land acquisition people [private land owners] who still resent the taking. They call it "the taking" and just, I think the attitude of the person or persons who dealt with the land owners or the people who leased land was, was, kind of um, overwhelming, to people who were not aware of their rights? And, um, you know, just, well [land owners must have felt] 'I can't say no to this guy.' He's got power and I don't have any. Well of course they just went ahead with it [land purchases] and they were – there was some resentment. And there were, um, possibilities that were not introduced to them [land owners] I think on leasing and – and selling. And um, they were unable to get into the – the resources that they [local owners] might have had. (Interview August 11, 2010)

This section of Cole's narrative is revealing on several levels. She hesitated often, pausing to choose her words. She used the information shared with her to draw conclusions about why this event took place the way it did, particularly why so many local people agreed to sell their property. She said the Park Service might have offered other options to land owners. And she recognized loss of what were mostly recreational sites also meant people no longer had access to hunting and fishing. She said the term, "the taking" reflected feelings of powerlessness and loss without adequate compensation.<sup>36</sup> A little background information will help put the current situation into perspective.

### *Recent Relationships*

One stated purpose listed in the Voyageurs National Park General Management Plan is to enhance visitor experience by creating a unified partnership with adjacent private and public entities "who understand and appreciate the significance of the park and its surrounding lands and people," including encouraging and supporting tourism activities and educational programs compatible with stated park purposes. This means the park staff were expected to develop a cooperative relationship with local people. Public participation was encouraged so they can identify problems and issues related to managing the park's resources, and public comments were analyzed and included in the planning process. (Voyageurs National Park General Management Plan, 2001, p. I-10)

The original idea to manage public lands for multiple uses was innovative for the times (it was proposed by Ernest Oberholtzer in 1927)<sup>37</sup> and addressed local concerns but community resistance began to develop early in 1929 and Cole's narrative indicated

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<sup>36</sup> Private land owners were reimbursed for their property.

<sup>37</sup> Ernest Oberholtzer proposed the land management plan that laid the groundwork for the Little-Shipstead-Noland Acts in a letter to Secretary of Agriculture, William Jardine, November 7, 1927.

remnants were still in effect when Voyageurs National Park was created. The General Management Plan describes problems developing partnerships with the surrounding communities but concedes that “lack of collaborative and participatory approaches to park management in the past has resulted in misunderstandings and difficulties building community support” and added that efforts to build trust and improve communication have not been very successful (2001, p. I-21). According to Cole’s narrative, local memories can be long. She said, “I think then it was someone from the Omaha Regional Office that did the land acquisition and I think his name is still kind of a curse in our community” (Interview August 11, 2010).

Many local businesses depended on tourism so both Voyageurs National Park and surrounding communities would benefit from long-term sustainability of the environment, to support social and economic systems. Voyageurs National Park managers stated they would like the local communities to become involved in managing the natural resources in a way that will allow these wild places to maintain a healthy, natural state so the social and economic systems in the area can function effectively (General Management Plan, 2001). Visitors come to the area to see the park and during their visits they rely on local businesses to provide services the park does not offer. The presence of a national park in the area can impact local economy, but the strength of the impact depends on the economic diversity and marketing strategies in the communities. Local businesses near Voyageurs National Park include resort and tourist services, many of them established before the park was established. (Voyageurs National Park General Management Plan, 2001, p. I22)

Cole's narrative did hold some hope for future cooperation between Voyageurs National Park and the local residence. She said, "I had people ... openly [say] ... the park was the worst thing that ever happened... [T]hey may still feel that way but they don't say it anymore. ...[The park is here now and] soon you grow accustomed to it." (Interview August 11, 2010)

Cole shared several observations about the kinds of experiences people have looked for when they visit national parks or other wild places and the way those expectations have changed. She said when she was living at Yellowstone National Park people came to see the geologic formations, the hot springs, the geysers, and other natural wonders, not the wild animals.

People came to Yellowstone because this was this wonderful place. They didn't come for the wildlife especially but ... they came for the thermal aspects of the park. But when you're driving down the road and here is the bison right in the middle of the road [and] moose and elk and all this. And now of course the wolves have made people much more aware of the relationships between all of the animals. (Interview August 11, 2010)

She alluded to the same attitude when she talked about resort owners in the Voyageurs National Park area who were surprised to find paying guests who just wanted to "look at the lake and whittle, and this was just an eye-opener for some of these older resort owners" (Interview August 11, 2010). They could not understand visitors who did not want to hunt or catch fish. Cole described the shift from taking resources to experiencing nature through interaction as "very dynamic changes" (Interview August

11, 2010). For example, she said “local people always laughed ‘cause we had our canoe and we would go out in the canoe and all the community nobody here” used canoes back then, but of course they do now. She recognized the park employees had a different attitude toward the animals and the land than the local people did. Now younger people with different experiences come to the park and want to enjoy the lake in other ways besides fishing. (Interview August 6, 2010)

One area of conflict comes from different ideas about the way resources in wild places should be used and managed. Early efforts to create Voyageurs National Park often segregated people into one of two camps; people who wanted to enjoy the solitude and commune with nature, and those who wanted to hunt and fish. Local residents, particularly resort owners, did not understand why wilderness should be valued and preserved rather than developing the land for economic growth by offering hunting and fishing. Concepts of environmental conservation were still new when the park was created and most of the campers were not concerned about the impact they might have on the wilderness. As one resort area owner said, “People go to Kabetogama to fish and loaf, they don’t give a damn about the rocks,”<sup>38</sup> but that statement was made in 1964. When the Voyageurs National Park General Management Plan (2001) states at the time of the study the most popular recreational activities at the park centered on the natural environment, particularly fishing, viewing scenery and wildlife, day hiking, camping, houseboating, paddling, and snowmobiling (2001, p. I-1). While park visitors and local people still liked to fish, growing numbers of visitors came to hike, camp, paddle, and rent houseboats (2001, p. I-22).

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<sup>38</sup> *International Falls Daily Journal*, 22 September 1964; reprint of Associated Press account of the Minneapolis hearing. Quoted here from Witzig, 2004, p. 51.

The Voyageurs National Park General Management Plan shows how the local communities and Voyageurs National Park can benefit from collaborative efforts (2001, p. I-22) but as Cole said, local people have been reluctant to open the lines of communication. As a result, a lot of the resources available through the park are not being utilized.

[Glen] just didn't anticipate the opposition. And the people were not open to information about ... how it would work and what information could tell 'm about the fishery or the wildlife. They had their own, their minds were made up and ... a lot of people and the community leaders were the ones that you know were, well they were just very, very hard to get them to change their ... attitudes about things. And they could not you know if you had information from someplace else that showed this and this would be about what happened or what had happened there it was not going to translate to what would happen in this area. This was, this place was different. (Interview August 6, 2010)

The relationship between Voyageurs National Park and the local communities may have a bleak past, but Cole's narrative did show a few bright spots for the future. She said, "...[I]t's really been only in the last few well maybe ten years, that there has a lot of public support [for the park] and by that I mean Chamber of Commerce, support for the park in International Falls and here [in Kabetogama] (Interview August 11, 2010). There are still issues to overcome. Cole summed up one of the biggest issues when she said, "People don't like change" (Interview August 6, 2010). The appearance of a federal park in the middle of a traditionally rural, poor, geographically marginalized area forced



the community to accept a lot of change in a relatively short time. “The taking” deprived people of private cabins and recreational lands, took away resources some local businesses needed to survive, limited or closed access to traditional fishing and hunting sites, and possibly left people feeling powerless to resist government forces from outside the community. Cole said these communities have traditionally mistrusted government which further complicates matters. (Interview August 11, 2010) Focusing on economic growth by protecting the environment could create common goals and help people move past their differences.

#### Shared History: Cole and Voyageurs National Park

Cole’s narrative demonstrated her ability to make long-lasting, meaningful, personal connections with many types of people. Cole’s narrative described people on both sides of the debate, she used language to place herself and the people she described in different contexts, and she demonstrated high levels of empathy for people on different sides of the same issues, including those with whom she seems to disagree.

Most of Cole’s adult life was spent in some sort of affiliation with the National Park Service so it would be natural for her to identify herself with this group. However, during the interview process Cole shifted her position from identifying with the National Park Service community to placing herself outside the park service social group and outside the local, International Falls community. She consistently identified herself as a member of the Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park communities of employers, concessioners, and their families but placed distance between herself, the Voyageurs National Park service employees and the local community members in narratives she used to describe her experiences there.

At the time of the interviews Cole still volunteered with Voyageurs National Park, even though she no longer lived in the area.<sup>39</sup> Her actions indicate she still feels connected to the people with Voyageurs National Park even though her future plans indicate she is ready to move to a new phase in her life. She admitted she feels attached to the house and the community but her first allegiance is still with the people.

[W]ell we lived here a long time and I think that is the attachment to a place. And have really enjoyed working with, the people in parks who have the same ideas about park management and that sort of thing so that's – that's a good part of it. Uh huh. And the thing that will take me away from here probably is age. Because it gets, you know I don't live here year round anymore so. That time is very, very near. (Interview August 14, 2010)

#### Influence Created by Interpersonal Connections

Cole said she was drawn to environmental issues in general and national parks in particular by the people and the excitement generated by their work but her narratives indicate she placed more emphasis on the people than the research.<sup>40</sup> She indicated her relationships with people are important and her interviews illustrate how hard she worked to establish and maintain connections with others. It is also appears Cole felt she should be the one to reach out to others and establish relationships. During the interviews Cole briefly described the research or work with the park, then she would talk in detail about the people. Often in the narratives she said she stayed in touch with friends and described

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<sup>39</sup> Personal conversation with Catherine Crawford, Reference Librarian at Voyageurs National Park on January 3, 2012. Crawford mails work to Cole, who completes a task and mails the work back.

<sup>40</sup> In Transcript 1, Lines 1451 – 66 Cole summarizes some of the studies Glen worked on at Voyageurs National Park and in Transcript 2, Lines 593 – 641 Cole talks about Joe Kale, the man tasked with purchasing land for the National Park Service, in great detail. In these and other instances Cole spends most of the discourse describing the people and briefly references the research or work for the park to place her narration in context.

what they are doing since they moved out of the area. The language she used to describe these relationships indicated they gave her a lot of pleasure. For example, Cole described meeting people in New Richmond in great detail. She says she joined an exercise group and the church, and connected with people near her new home in her condo so she can play cards. This follows the patterns she described when she first arrived in the International Falls area. (Interview August 14, 2010) She developed a behavior pattern to help her meet new people in new places.

Cole credited her family with giving her the tools to go out and meet new people. She grew up with close ties to her family but later her situation changed when she moved away. She learned to make new friends to fill the gaps in her support group. She said, “[I]t probably is because I come from a small family and often times family is ... you know the support group. Well I lived away from my only my sister and [her family]... my brother lived away and he didn’t have a family. And so yeah it was community.” (Interview August 14, 2010)

This dissertation examined the concepts Cole seems to feel are important in terms of identities, activities, and relationships in a particular situation. Building relationships includes situations in which the people involved recognize a relationship by contacting each other and recognizing their involvement is important. It considered what kinds of relationships Cole identified in her discourse as relevant, which were taken for granted, and which were under construction or being created as part of her narrative.

In her narrative Cole consistently identified herself as a minor player filling a supporting role. She described herself as a typical housewife who did “housewifery things” and adds this was the “pattern at that time” (Interview August 6, 2010). She did

state she felt she “fit in” with the National Park Service and she “liked that” but the only time she included herself in this community is in her description of the “park family” at Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park. (Interview August 11, 2010) She listed particular qualities exhibited by these communities and said these were why she felt included in a tight-knit, supportive group.

Cole used the term “we” in her descriptions of life in the Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Park communities. She described her involvement in lots of social and volunteer activities. Her descriptions sound similar to those she used when she talked about her family in the first interview on August 6, 2010. In both cases the people in the group had interests similar to hers and with each other. They worked, volunteered, and socialized together. (Interview August 6, 2010) She described both activities as supporting and as a personal resource for her.

#### The Interview Process with Cole

The first interview established Cole’s personal history and emphasized social elements that might have influenced her perceptions of natural places or her ability to form personal attachments to them. It also developed elements of her personality and beliefs based on her narratives. Her responses created the context in which her narrative in the three interviews could be contextualized and evaluated. She described changes she had seen in National Park management decisions and the results of those changes. She specifically mentioned the shift from feeding bears and shooting wolves in National Parks to allowing nature to develop on its own, with little human interference. Her statement is an example of the way she positioned herself as an observer rather than an active participant in social events around her. She credited her husband and other

professional stewards as her source of information on the environment, protection and preservation of ecosystems, sustainable harvests of natural resources, and other environmental issues. She spoke as an informed citizen rather than a professional, so she could describe general aspects of research, legislation, management and other aspects of environmental management but did not have the depth of knowledge available to a professional steward, such as a Voyageurs National Park researcher.

In the second interview Cole was asked to share her opinions, interests and experiences, particularly with natural environments and Voyageurs National Park. She described what she called “the taking” or the acquisition of private land to create Voyageurs National Park and she consistently credited her activities in outdoor recreation and environmental issues with her connections to people she cared about rather than her own interests. When she discussed events surrounding the taking she positioned herself as an outside observer, sympathetic to local people but as someone who felt the benefits the park provided outweighed the loss of private property. Her opinions on environmental issues and resource allocation reflected the work and recommendations she credited to National Park employees so her social surroundings appear to have influenced her views on environmental issues. As the wife of a National Park researcher, her social environment would allow her to have access to the latest scientific findings on Voyageurs National Park. Her opinions could have been shaped by combinations of social pressure and availability of reliable sources.

In the third interview Cole was asked to define “stewardship” and “environmental ethics,” and to share her beliefs related to the natural environment and Voyageurs National Park. Her narrative indicated her ability to see more than one side to a

complicated issue. She explained that people and the biota have needs they will struggle to meet and cling to if they feel threatened (Interview August 14, 2010).<sup>41</sup> She described having fun with other community members, despite differences of opinion. She said, “Well it really was quite easy you know because Glen’s job was secure. And the people here, I think they got used to us... [W]e were on a different wavelength than a lot of them were but we always enjoyed the group” (Interview August 14, 2010).

#### Data Analysis Chart

Cole’s narrative demonstrated her ability to make connections with the environment through her interpersonal relationships with people who are deeply committed to environmental stewardship, rather than through her own experience. An overview of the data analysis charts illustrates how the groups of coding are derived. (See Figure 15)

The interviews were coded and organized to show how Cole developed interpersonal connections with others in Voyageurs National Park and the local communities. Effective stewardship of the park requires community members and visitors develop connections with the park and its resources. Cole’s interviews were coded to identify how social influences affected community relationships with the park and the staff. Coding identified data relevant to the research questions and elements Cole indicated were important to her, so they could be evaluated. (See Figure 16)

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<sup>41</sup> Cole was asked to compare the impact of a hydroelectric dam such as the one on Rainy Lake at International Falls and a beaver dam.

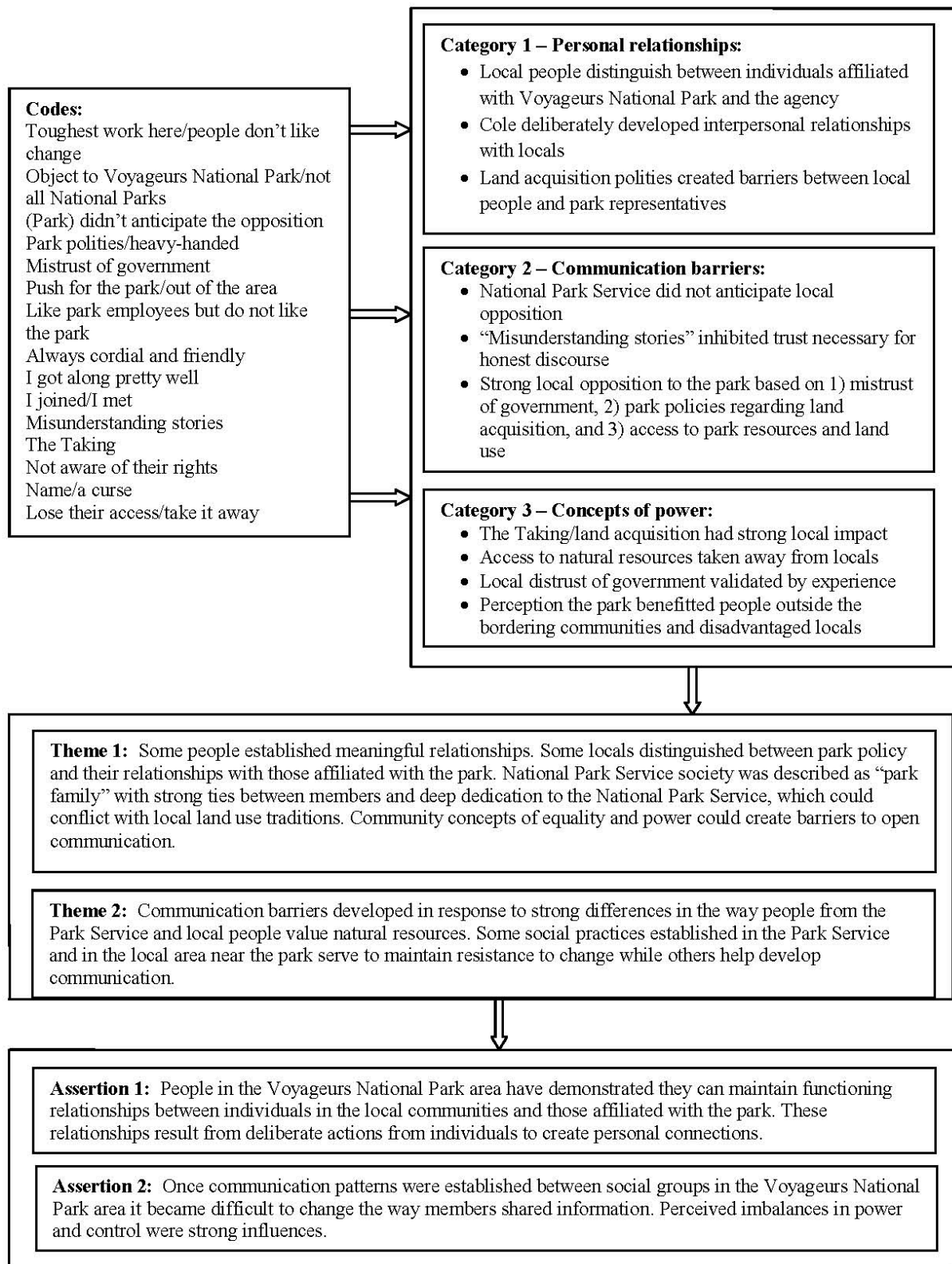


Figure 15: Overview of Cole Data Analysis Charts

Toughest work here/people don't like change	Always cordial and friendly
Object to Voyageurs/not all National Parks	I got along pretty well
(Park) didn't anticipate the opposition	I joined/I met
Park policies/heavy-handed	Misunderstanding stories/no basis
Mistrust of government	The Taking
Push for the park/out of the area	Not aware of their rights
Like park employees but do not like the park	Name/a curse
	Lose their access/take it away

Figure 16: Initial Coded Data for Cole

The codes were organized into groupings based on similar concepts, which revealed three main issues: 1) personal relationships between Cole and the people with whom she interacted, 2) communication barriers, especially between people who supported Voyageurs National Park and those who did not, and 3) concepts of power associated with the creation and regulation of the park.

Since Cole was not a National Park Service employee her statements about research and Park Service management were treated as unconfirmed opinions and used to evaluate the way she framed descriptive narratives about Voyageurs National Park. Her descriptions also indicated her relationships with individuals from the park and from the local communities, and interactions between people from the park and the local communities.

### *Categories*

After the codes were evaluated and organized, they were examined to identify related, underlying meaning. These groupings of coded data, or categories, identify patterns by deleting, condensing, and interpreting related codes to find consistent themes,



expressed as the most comprehensive element articulated in each group. Organizing codes into categories identified the social influences Cole described in her narratives, and the ways local societies influenced communication and related actions in connection with Voyageurs National Park. (See Figure 17)

The first category, personal relationships, illustrates local people were able to distinguish between the individuals associated with Voyageurs National Park and the federal organization they represented. Cole indicated this distinction was important to her because it allowed her to make friends and participate in events outside of the society identified with Voyageurs National Park. She was not ostracized by the community so she was able to develop relationships with people by cultivating her neighbors and joining local groups, such as the church.

Cole did say Park Service policies, particularly land acquisition, created barriers between her and members of the local community, but she also indicated she chose to respect some of those boundaries. She did not feel motivated to contribute to the local community in a meaningful way, or to work or volunteer extensively in community groups once her children left the local school system (Interview August 14, 2010). She said she enjoyed working for Lake States Association (Interview August 6, 2010) and she said she felt comfortable there because she fit in with the Park Service community (Interview August 11, 2010). She did say she had never seen herself as a leader but instead she had “smaller aspirations” (Interview August 14, 2010). However, her descriptions of her activities show her willingness to support others as an active follower.

Despite social barriers between local people and those affiliated with Voyageurs National Park, Cole chose to deliberately develop relationships with the people around

**Category 1****Personal relationships:**

- Local people distinguish between individuals affiliated with Voyageurs National Park and the agency
- Cole deliberately developed interpersonal relationships with people in the neighborhood
- Land acquisition policies created barriers to establishing personal connections between local people and Voyageurs National Park representatives

**Category 2****Communication barriers:**

- National Park Service did not anticipate local opposition to Voyageurs National Park
- “Misunderstanding stories” inhibit trust necessary for honest discourse
- Strong local opposition to Voyageurs National Park based on 1) distrust of government agencies, 2) Voyageurs National Park politics regarding land acquisition, and 3) access to park resources and land use.

**Category 3****Concepts of power:**

- The Taking/land acquisition had a strong impact on the local population
- Access to natural resources is taken away from local people and they reacted as if they had no choice except to comply
- Local distrust of government was validated by experience
- Perception the park benefitted people outside the bordering communities and disadvantaged local people

Figure 17: Categories for Cole

her. She described meeting neighbors, joining the church, participating and sometimes organizing local social events (Interview August 14, 2010), and spending time with her family in organized recreational events such as canoeing and picnicking (Interview August 11, 2010). When people commented negatively about the park or land acquisition she said she “just ignored it” (Interview August 11, 2010) but her actions indicate local opinion influenced some aspects of her social behavior.

The second category described communication barriers Cole identified. She did not feel the National Park Service anticipated the strong local opposition directed toward

Voyageurs National Park, but documentation of events preceding and following the establishment of the park indicate otherwise.<sup>42</sup> She also described lack of trust when she spoke of “misunderstanding stories” circulating about Voyageurs National Park in local, surrounding communities. These types of narrative can indicate lack of trust between some local community members and the Voyageurs National Park staff which would make open, honest communication difficult. Establishing open communication between the park staff and local community members would have been challenging, given the social background of the area. She described social forces determined to oppose the presence of a government agency based on local community distrust of government agencies, their objections to Voyageurs National Park land acquisition policies, and their loss of access to park resources and their historic use of the area.

The third category, concepts of power, analyzed events and beliefs that could inform local constructs about the ability of local community members to speak to government agencies and be heard in a meaningful way. Local social constructs predisposed distrust of government agencies, land acquisition and loss of access to natural resources validated those beliefs, and the perception that Voyageurs National Park benefited people outside the community at local expense exacerbated tendencies to end what appeared to locals as a pointless discussion. Cole did wonder why local people did not band together and fight the Park Service acquisition, but she speculated that land owners found circumstances overwhelming (Interview August 11, 2010).

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<sup>42</sup> Refer to the section, “Local Communities Near Voyageurs National Park and the National Park Service” for information on local reaction to Voyageurs National Park.

### *Themes*

Two themes were created, based on the categories. The themes were developed by grouping the categories based on similar meanings and summarizing those meanings based on a shared idea or concept. As a community member with ties to the Voyageurs National Park staff, Cole often positioned herself as an observer moving between these two social groups. While she had personal ties to both groups her strongest allegiance was with her “park family” and her husband, who was a National Park Service employee. (See Figure 18)

The first theme described how social connections influenced the relationships people developed and how they discussed issues related to Voyageurs National Park. Cole indicated some people were able to establish meaningful relationships despite differences of opinion surrounding Voyageurs National Park. This was possible because

**Theme 1:**

Some people managed to establish meaningful relationships, despite communication barriers. Some local people distinguished between Voyageurs National Park policy and their relationships with Park Service employees and their families. The Park Service society was described as a “park family” with strong ties between members and deep dedication to the National Park Service, which could conflict with local traditional land use. Community concepts of equality and power influenced the types of communication local people shared by creating barriers to honest, open communication.

**Theme 2:**

Communication barriers developed in response to the strong differences in the way people from the National Park societies and local social groups value natural resources. Some of the social practices established in the Park Service and in the local area near the park serve to maintain resistance to change while others work to open new means of communication.

Figure 18: Themes for Cole

people were able to look beyond their differences and see each other as members of the same communities who therefore shared some ideologies. They chose to focus on similarities and set differences aside, at least under some circumstances. However, Cole indicated strong social groupings did develop based on alliances with Voyageurs National Park staff or local community members.

The second theme identified communication barriers between social groups, caused by strong differences of opinion over the way natural resources should be allocated, maintained, and utilized. Voyageurs National Park is a federal agency and official communication with the local community is structured by federal regulations. Cole indicated local opinions surrounding the park were based on established social practices, and shared beliefs regarding control over personal property and access to local natural resources, particularly on the Kabetogama Peninsula in the center of the park. Members of both social groups indicated they value natural resources and access to the park, but local resistance to change and the inflexible avenues of communication available to the park management create communication barriers.

#### *Assertions*

Two assertions were developed based on the themes. Cole's narrative indicated people affiliated with Voyageurs National Park and those with strong ties to the local communities did develop effective relationships and establish meaningful forms of communication regarding natural resources in the park but they had to work at it. Cole's actions indicate some ways people created personal connections but she seems to have limited her committed involvement to organizations affiliated with Voyageurs National Park. While Cole described herself as a stay-at-home housewife and a follower rather

than a leader, she also said she worked for Lake States Association for ten years. During that time she served as the treasurer and later as manager (Interview August 6, 2010).

(See Figure 19)

The first assertion considered the discourse each of the two social groups could

**Assertion 1:**

People in the Voyageurs National Park area have demonstrated their ability to maintain functioning relationships between individuals in the local communities and those affiliated with the park. These functioning relationships result from deliberate actions from individuals to create personal connections.

**Assertion 2:**

Once communication patterns were established between social groups in the Voyageurs National Park area it became difficult to change the way members share information. Perceived imbalances in power and control are strong influences.

Figure 19: Assertions for Cole

create to negotiate effectively. The local community and the National Park employees were both interested in protecting and sustaining the local, natural ecosystems. Each group found areas of agreement and areas in which they disagreed. If they could continue to improve their communication they could also improve their ability to work together to maintain healthy, sustainable local ecosystems everyone can enjoy. Cole also indicated a shift in the types of recreation local people and visitors to Voyageurs National Park enjoy. Her descriptions indicate shifts in emphasis from collecting natural resources in and around the park to recreational activities. This behavior shift could allow opportunities for improved communication between local community members and the Voyageurs National Park management.

The second assertion addressed concepts of power and possible communication barriers those concepts could create. When Voyageurs National Park was proposed and later established, Cole reported the local community members felt marginalized and powerless to stop government acquisition of private land and control over previously accessible state managed land on the Kabetogama Peninsula. These established social patterns could be difficult to change, despite changes in park policy and local recreational activities.

### Conclusion

Evaluating Cole's narrative revealed two communication styles related to environmental ethics and stewardship surrounding Voyageurs National Park. She consistently indicated her interest in the park and the environment was directly related to her attachments to people who care about these issues. She also described the ways social groups associated with the local community and the Voyageurs National Park staff negotiated perceptions of power through communication styles. These issues create barriers to open, effective communication but changes in the local populations, in visitor interests, and management styles at the park could indicate improved opportunities for communication in the future.

The first point, Cole's ability to transfer her interest in individuals to environmental issues they care about, creates new opportunities to make personal connections between Voyageurs National Park and a group of people who have been disconnected from the park in the past. In her narrative Cole said she was interested in the people first and the environment later (Interview August 6, 2010). Her position indicated she had created "secondary" connections to the environment through personal

connections with others. This perspective is often overlooked. One environmental ethics theory, deep ecology, does encourage people who are not interested in the outdoor activities to draw on the experiences of an “ecological field-worker” rather than their own to create an understanding of the environment but it is presented after a stronger argument in favor of direct, personal experiences with nature.

Deep ecology (Naess, 1984; Sessions, 1995) sets guidelines and creates a call to social action. The last guideline states, “Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation to implement the changes.”<sup>43</sup> The action requires most people to step out of their comfort zone and few will take this step unless they have strong emotional commitments. Naess also explains how followers can create emotional connections by developing attachments to nature he calls “ecosophy”. The process of ecosophy generates its own, personal wisdom, requiring that each person work to bring about social change to support that personal vision (Naess, 1989). He states the best way to connect with the environment is through self realization based on long association with nature but if a person has not had close personal experiences to draw on, the experience of an “ecological field-worker” can be used instead.

Ecosophy places stewards like National Park employees in an ideal position to act as ecological field workers, particularly those who self-identify as researchers, educators, or who work in public outreach. Trained stewards like the National Park Service employees could develop messages designed to encourage connections between the environment and a new group of people who might otherwise be excluded from the discussion on environmental issues.

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<sup>43</sup> Environmental activists Naess and Sessions developed eight basic principles as a guide to action for deep ecology movement followers. The guidelines show followers how to turn their concerns into positive actions.



In the second point, Cole's narrative offered insight on the way two main cultural groups interacted with each other, with the natural environment in Voyageurs National Park, and the surrounding communities. Based on her interviews and the existing research, conflict between the National Park Service and the local community seems to have been inevitable. Members of each social group had historically established traditions supporting their use of natural resources. They would receive positive reinforcement for their actions and beliefs from other group members. Each would be reluctant to change existing behavior unless they were compelled. Circumstances changed after Voyageurs National Park was established in 1975 and the way people in both groups relate to the environment also changed. Cole said the International Falls Chamber of Commerce did begin to work with the Voyageurs National Park staff around the year 2000 to promote visitation to the park and to educate visitors about invasive species. Web sites like Explore Minnesota, the Crane Lake Tourism Bureau, Gateway Communities, and US National Parks and Travel Guides featured information about Voyageurs National Park on their home pages. These sites reflect how resort, campground, adventure, and guide services promoted the park as a destination, with their services available to help visitors have an enjoyable experience.

Local businesses could work with the Voyageurs National Park staff to expand activities and teach visitors about recreational opportunities in the area. The park staff have created public access to information about the plants, animals, geology, and history of the area. The research and historic site development has been used to expand boat tours, camp sites have been improved based on visitor requests, and new educational programs were developed that allow visitors to explore the park alone or as part of a

guided tour. Careful stewardship has created healthy populations of animals, including beaver, deer, wolves, Canada lynx, and eagles. (nps.gov)

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Saldaña (2009) was referenced as the basis for developing coding methods to devalue the data. Fairclough's (2003) concepts of critical social research were used as a guideline to develop a final analysis of assertions from the three key participants. In their narratives, each participant expressed different types of social influence related to the natural environment in Voyageurs National Park. Each participant described different types of relationships with the environment but each considered that relationship valuable and important. Mainville and Grim described their experiences with wilderness as spiritual and personally rewarding, but in different ways and for different reasons. Mainville referenced her childhood and social ties to her Ojibwe teachings while Grim assigned his connection to the park in context with his personal and professional interests. In contrast, Cole described a sense of appreciation based on personal relationships with others who said they were deeply connected in some way to the natural environment.

In all cases the relationships participants described were grounded in what each said was a close personal attachment, either directly or indirectly, to the natural environment in Voyageurs National Park and nearby ecosystems. Participants referred to their upbringing and social background, and described early experiences as informing how they developed relationships with the Voyageurs National Park ecosystems. They also talked about sharing their experiences with others through their connections with Voyageurs National Park in personally enjoyable and enriching experiences.

Managing resources in a sustainable, fair way was an important consideration. Participants described interactions with others regarding how access to the same, limited resources could be managed. They expressed concern over sustainability of the natural resources they utilized and concern those resources will be compromised in the future. They also described how government regulation has had an impact the way they access and use natural resources. All felt regulation and protection were necessary to maintain the integrity of the few natural resources left in their communities and the world.

#### Assertion Summary for Mainville

The participants' referenced social influences on the ways they reported interacting with and responding to the environment in Voyageurs National Park but Mainville's social influences appear to be the most deliberate and cultivated. The first assertion summarized how she maintained the ritual traditions her father taught her. The rituals reminded her to be grateful for natural resources and positioned her as a member of the environmental community in and near Voyageurs National Park. As an adult her Ojibwe society continued to reinforce concepts of specific types of relationships between her as an individual and the other members of her society, and specific plants and animals. As a result she learned to feel gratitude, to be thankful, to share with others, and to symbolize her respect for nature with gifts of tobacco. She followed the spiritual teachings she said her father taught her by returning the bones of animals, like the beaver, to their natural habitat and by following the social restrictions established by her clan toward other clan members and toward the totem animal. Wild rice held spiritual, symbolic significance for her and represented who the Ojibwe were as a social group.

These actions and the social implications associated with them allowed her to maintain her position as a specific individual in her social group, which included natural elements.

In the second assertion Mainville described living a nomadic lifestyle on the reserve, traveling with her family and clan to take advantage of seasonal resources. Her narrative described close social and personal ties between herself, her family and other Ojibwe, and certain animals and plants in the natural and supernatural communities. The Ojibwe traditionally depended directly on natural resources and social support for their survival. Mainville's narrative described her sense of self identity in relation to her connections between the Ojibwe, her family, her clan members, her totem, and key natural resources, particularly wild rice, beaver, tobacco, and water.

Mainville described a deep social connection between people, and some plants and animals. Respect and gratitude remind the Ojibwe they are one among many (Callicott & Nelson, 2004). Mainville said the Ojibwe depended on the natural resources for their survival and their social network. She talked about self-sufficiency in relation to wild rice and the ability to take care of herself. Mainville's connections to the land helped make her the person she is today.

#### Assertion Summary for Grim

Grim's narratives described several strong social influences, particularly his association with Native Americans, the example set by his parents, his professional experiences as a biologist, his inclusion in the International Falls community, and as a professional with Voyageurs National Park. The two primary influences affecting the way he described his experiences with the ecosystems in the park appear to be his deep interest in and appreciation for the way nature works and the joy he experienced when he

shared his knowledge with others. His narratives illustrate how he used language to transmit his knowledge and appreciation for nature to others to help them form the kinds of personal attachments with nature and the park that he experienced. Fairclough (2003, p. 204) describes discourse as an important feature in initiating social change through sharing knowledge, since “this is the form in which ‘knowledge’ is produced, distributed, and consumed” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 204). Grim’s interviews provided many examples of the ways he used different types of communication (written and spoken) in different forums (interpersonal, small group, formal legislation) to transmit information and motivate receivers to take action based on shared information.

The first assertion from Grim’s interviews summarized his interest in local participation in Voyageurs National Park management and managing natural resources in local communities. He described how local people could support the park by contacting their legislators, by supporting legislation to protect the environment, and by considering the good of the whole. He said, “Deciding how much do you need to survive on the planet is different than how much do you want” (Interview July 26, 2010).

The second assertion summarized Grim’s descriptions of the ways Voyageurs National Park has contributed to the American social identity by preserving an important part of history. This stewardship of public property included management decisions informed by public needs and expectations but as Grim said, the public is composed of individuals with different personal interests. He referred to Searle’s (1977) work on the history of preservation in the Quetico-Superior area to illustrate “the tug of war that went on between the various interest groups” (Interview July 19, 2010) and he said this conflict still exists. Fairclough (2003, p. 205) describes “social practice” as “a relatively

stabilized form of social activity” and the concept was used as a guideline to evaluate the tension between Voyageurs National Park regulatory requirements, and public access to and ability to influence management decisions. The park staff established a stabilized social practice to set levels of access and influence between park resources and the public but the stabilized model is open to change. The park is relatively open to the public so individuals have opportunities to influence the stability of the park’s social model through formal and informal actions. Barraque (2008) describes the ways citizen participation can influence the success or failure of environmental preservation and restoration projects by undermining those efforts in communities bordering reserves and Grim’s narrative indicated the Voyageurs National Park staff understand this connection.

People living near Voyageurs National Park or those who are interested in the park need to meet several types of criteria to be effective participants in park management. Participatory modeling shows different types of outcomes based on the motivation and abilities of community participants (Jonsson, Anderson, et. al, 2007, p. 207 – 14). Even interested citizens can find participation difficult. The Environmental Protection Agency (1980) recognized individuals needed guidelines to participate effectively so they published pamphlets to help people interested in participating in clean water advisory groups. These social forces are considered necessary to ensure visitors and local people have opportunities to express what they want from their public lands.

#### Assertion Summary for Cole

The human need for social bonds was illustrated in Cole’s narratives. She described actively creating opportunities to meet others and form personal relationships with them. She described her childhood ties with her small family as the model for her

social interactions with others as an adult, after she moved away and when she moved to International Falls which did not have a preexisting, compatible social group for her and her family. Fairclough (2003, p. 206) describes discourses as diverse representations of social life which are inherently positioned based on the ways social actors view their circumstances.

In the first assertion Cole's narrative offers examples of people who were willing to maintain functioning relationships with individuals who held different opinions about Voyageurs National Park. Often these relationships were deliberately cultivated and it appears the participants did not always trust each other.

Cole's narrative also demonstrated possible trust issues between her and some members of the community. She demonstrated her ability to move between different types of social settings and adapt the appropriate types of narrative necessary to create personal attachments with others. However, her discussions and the actions she described demonstrated she favored the society of people associated with Voyageurs National Park over that of the local community. It is possible the tensions between these two groups could have strengthened her sense of loyalty toward the park and the people who represented it.

The second assertion described how hard it can be for an established social group to change the way members share information. Discourse is part of social activity and changing representations of the ways things are and have been, or the ways they might be could disrupt the social structure (Fairclough, 2003, p. 206-7). Forming attachments through shared narratives can be the first step toward learning new discourses and using them self-consciously for a specific purpose while keeping a distance from them



(Fairclough, 2003, p. 208). This behavior can also be a first step toward ownership of a new concept or idea (Fairclough, 2003, p. 208). Perceptions of power add another element to communication between Voyageurs National Park staff and the local community. Cole speculated local people did not band together and resist land acquisition when the park was created (Interview August 11, 2010) so it is possible perceptions of power contributed to the communication profile.

### Overview of the Three Case Studies

The three participants were chosen based on the same criteria but their responses revealed different perspectives on the ways each shaped and interpreted communication about the natural places in Voyageurs National Park. Each stated the park, stewardship, and the concepts of environmental ethics the park represents were important to them but their reasons for developing and maintaining their attachments to these concepts were drawn from different social foundations.

Mainville's connections to the Ojibwe and what she described as her traditional teachings created strong, personal, emotional ties to nature. She described wild rice as necessary for Ojibwe youth to be self-sufficient (Interview June 29, 2010) because it was such an integral part of their society. She based her respect for nature and the gifts she received from natural resources on the power of nature, which she said was "stronger than we are" and on her father's teachings (Interview July 16, 2010). Her perceptions of her relationships with natural places, including the park, appear to be based on concepts of power, social ties, and conscious gratitude for nature as a source of the necessities of life.

Grim's attachments to the environment and to Voyageurs National Park appeared strong and personal but were supported by his interest in scientific understanding of the ways nature operates. His emotional connections seem to be with people and what personal relationships to natural resources can offer individuals. His arguments to preserve nature focused on the consequences to people. For example, he said, "[I]f we're running around this planet doing things that are detrimental to our abilities to be healthy and sustain ourselves...that's a problem...[W]e're not separate from all this. We're part of this" (Interview, July 26, 2010). He presented a logical reason for protecting the local environment, including Voyageurs National Park. He occasionally mentioned the park and its ecosystems in connection with his personal beliefs, as when he described his job as the best job in the world. He said, "It's not just a job, it's something that you really like to experience and really like to do, and share. That's the best part is sharing" (Interview June 29, 2010). He believed others shared his experiences. He said, "[A] lot of the people that are out fishing and walking through the woods and stuff, they view nature as, they're part of it and they have a real spiritual feeling for this stuff. So they don't like seeing part of that nature get all screwed up" (Interview June 29, 2010). His descriptions of personal connections to the park and the ecosystems have an emotional element but most of the attachments he described appear to be driven by practical interests.

It is possible Grim could have formed a similarly deep attachment to a different ecosystem in a different place. In his narrative he said he came to International Falls because he liked the wildness of the area, he wanted to be part of the new school forming there, and he wanted to be part of the local community (Interview June 29, 2010). If

circumstances had led him to another place, presumably he would have formed similar connections to another park, preserve, or wild place and another social group.

Cole's attachments to Voyageurs National Park were based on social and personal ties. Her connections to the park and the ecosystem there could be attributed to chance. She consistently stated her interest in the environment and Voyageurs National Park was based on her interest in particular people, especially her husband and daughters. If her husband had worked for another agency or at a different National Park where she would have become part of a different social group she would presumably have created attachments with people who had different interests. This argument could be countered by observing Cole's choice of associates. Her husband, her daughters, and many of her friends had close attractions to recreation and preservation associated with Voyageurs National Park and other natural ecosystems. Her choice of associates might be based on circumstances but there is enough evidence in her interviews to indicate she felt drawn to people who enjoy outdoor recreation and occupations.

#### Different Kinds of Attachments

Of the three participants, Mainville is the most likely person to have been drawn only to Voyageurs National Park and surrounding ecosystems based on her social ties to the area. The Ojibwe came to northern Wisconsin and Minnesota as part of a spiritual quest, so her ties to the Ojibwe caused her to form strong attachments with a particular place. Grim came to the area because he was offered a teaching position at the new college. He said, "...I came to International Falls and here I was lucky enough to get a job at the new Rainy River State Junior College at the time. And, eventually we were in the wing of the school and eventually they built a campus for us and we moved over there

and the campus has been there ever since” (Interview, June 29, 2010). He also described his interest in science. He said, “I couldn’t wait to take Biology when I was a sophomore in high school. It was my favorite class and I guess really fed in on that. And then, when I went to North Dakota State from Fargo Central I declared my intention to become a Biology teacher, which I always wanted to be. And so, that’s what I got into” (Interview, June 29, 2010). His words and tone indicate his love of biology and teaching motivated him to look for a teaching position such as the one offered in International Falls. After he graduated from North Dakota State University, Fargo he would have applied for teaching positions in other communities if he had not received an offer from the college in International Falls, Minnesota. He stated in his narrative that he is interested in nature as a scientist and enjoys outdoor recreation. He described exploring and recreating in natural areas whenever he had the opportunity, no matter where he lived. His interests made him predisposed to form attachments to whatever natural areas were available to him. Expressions of those attachments would have been shaped by opportunities in the local community and the society in which he found himself. Cole also described strong social influences as her motivation to become interested in Voyageurs National Park and for becoming involved as a volunteer. She could have supported other parks or even other causes if circumstances had been different.

Grim expressed the strongest interest in environmental preservation because it benefited humanity and because he believed it was the right thing to do. Mainville also talked about water quality and protecting wild places in relation to physical health, but she emphasized the connections between the health of the ecosystems in Voyageurs National Park and surrounding areas and her sense of self as an Ojibwe. She used

tobacco, wild rice, and waterways as symbols of the social meanings she attached to the park ecosystems.

Cole seemed to have the weakest personal attachments to the ecosystems in Voyageurs National Park but she dedicated a great deal of time over her lifetime to the park as an employee and volunteer. She clearly stated her attachments to the park were through the people she cared about and because she felt most comfortable associating with people in the National Park Service, but she has demonstrated her ability to integrate into new social groups. She has chosen to offer support to Voyageurs National Park despite opportunities to become immersed in other social groups.

#### Patterns in the Research

Several patterns emerged in the research when the interviews with key participants were analyzed. Key points are summarized below.

- Each participant described personal attachment to Voyageurs National Park employees and associates, and belief in some aspect of the federal regulations governing the park and its resources
- Participants described distrust in government and animosity toward park regulations from community members who did not support the park
- It will continue to be difficult to establish open communication between Voyageurs National Park management and staff, and the local community members no matter how skillfully public outreach was handled, due to the circumstances surrounding land acquisition and legislation for the park
- Social concepts surrounding appropriate interactions with Voyageurs National Park ecosystems continue to change

- Voyageurs National Park researchers, interpreters, and other employees continue to work to develop research, create guidelines, and educate the public regarding sustainable access to natural resources
- People committed to preserving and protecting the natural resources in Voyageurs National Park have demonstrated their ability to change their perceptions and their behavior by working with Voyageurs National Park management to establish appropriate regulations

The participants in this dissertation demonstrated distinctly different styles of attachment to natural places in Voyageurs National Park. This was an unexpected finding and it could point out new opportunities to create connections between the park resources and visitors. While each participant expressed different motivations for forming attachments to the park, each reason was compelling to the participant. Each described social support for their behavior and opinions.

Participants also described communication with local community members who resented the restrictions established by the Voyageurs National Park federal mandates. Complaints included 1) distrust of government, particularly federal government restrictions in the local community, 2) frustration over lack of influence regarding loss of traditional access to natural places and resources, 3) loss of personal property and related traditional social behaviors, particularly family cabins, access to interior lakes through float planes, snow mobile and ATV access, limits on fishing, no hunting, and limits on

changing the environment through such activities as cutting down trees, building fire rings, trenching, and other behavior that alters the environment in a significant way.<sup>44</sup>

Societies in the area have historically distrusted government intervention. The brief history of the area presented earlier in this dissertation described the poor, isolated communities of European immigrants that initially settled in the area and the Ojibwe who were displaced by commercial activities, government mandates, and loss of tribal ownership of the land. (See Appendix B) When Voyageurs National Park was formed in 1975 the land used to create the park had to be acquired from other agencies and private owners. Acquisition meant individuals lost their recreational and commercial property so it is understandable that some community residents would still resent the National Park Service. Participants acknowledged the hardship imposed on local land owners but said the individual loss was acceptable when measured against establishing an important public resource.

The park management has expressed some frustration over their inability to engage local community members. However, recently there are indications local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce have begun to promote the park. Collaboration between the park and local businesses could provide steady income for local resorts, hotels, restaurants, and other service oriented businesses by encouraging year-round visitors to the park. The Ten-Year Projections of Annual Outdoor Recreation Participation by Minnesotans, 2004 to 2014, indicates Minnesotans will continue to participate in fishing and boating activities (See Table 1). Resort owners and marinas already benefit from houseboat and cabin rentals in summer. Voyageurs National Park has established recreational access by

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<sup>44</sup> Some activities, such as boating, fishing, snowmobiling, and camping are allowed in Voyageurs National Park but they are regulated and enforced by the National Park Rangers. Camping is restricted to established camp sites provided by the park. Visitors are encouraged to “leave no trace” in which the next person to use a site cannot tell if anyone has camped there before.

maintaining snow mobile trails and the winter ice road to encourage park visitors during the winter. This creates opportunities for local businesses to profit through access to the park.<sup>45</sup>

Research and teaching have been and will continue to be important activities for Voyageurs National Park. Research results are available to the public. Two participants, Grim and Cole, described the research conducted in the park and how the results of the research were used to change the way people interacted with park resources to create renewable, sustainable resources while allowing controlled visitor access and protecting the park biota. Cole described the shift from killing wolves and feeding bears to allowing ecosystems to find their own balance. Grim talked about establishing a rule curve for water levels set by the International Rainy Lake Board of Control, aided by research conducted with Voyageurs National Park and other agencies. He talked about the successful eagle recovery project which passed from state to federal jurisdiction when the area became federal land. In these and other instances the participants described how research led to understanding about the impact people have on the biota, which led to changed behavior through new regulations and public education. The park staff also encourage visitors and community members to utilize this information to improve local, private land and to help visitors enjoy the park resources in sustainable ways.

Social circumstances will continue to evolve as young people, community members, and visitors shift from traditional pastimes of hunting and fishing to more sustainable pursuits such as canoeing, snow shoeing, leave no trace camping, and hiking. Cole talked about how surprised local resort owners have been to find visitors who want to sit and relax rather than catch their limit of fish every day. She described how local

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<sup>45</sup> See Voyageurs National Park Final General Management Plan, Vol. 1 & 2, published August, 2001 for details on plans to create year-round opportunities for local businesses.



people would laugh at her family when they launched their canoe but as years passed more people came to canoe and kayak. Now Voyageurs National Park is adapting to accommodate paddlers as well as motor boats, to make areas of the park handicapped assessable, to accommodate large groups at special campsites, and to inform visitors about the Ojibwe history of the area.<sup>46</sup> Park interpreters, the rangers who work directly with the public, continuously update their information and create opportunities for visitors to learn about the park and develop sustainable behaviors when they recreate in the park. They want people to care about the park because it is public land and therefore belongs to American citizens, now and in the future.

Despite their best efforts, Voyageurs National Park managers have not been able to engage local community members in discussions about the best ways to manage the park resources. While some community businesses and the Chamber of Commerce are willing to work with the park, most take advantage of access to resources the park provides but do not seem willing to form any kind of partnership. The results of this study indicate these circumstances will continue to improve slowly but most members of the local community will not be sufficiently motivated to change their current behavior unless conditions change in a significant way.

#### Research Relevance Summary

This summary evaluated participant responses in relation to the research questions. Results were developed by evaluating participant assertions.

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<sup>46</sup> Since the interviews for this dissertation were conducted in summer of 2010, Rainy Lake Visitor Center in Voyageurs National Park has created a traditional style wigwam and established plants the Ojibwe traditionally used for food and medicine.

### *Describe Stewardship of the Land to Others*

Participants spoke of close personal attachments to the Voyageurs National Park. Each described different reasons for their feelings. Personal attachments encouraged interest and participation in stewardship of the park land. Participants indicated they enjoyed describing their experiences with others. Communicating their interests in wilderness added personal value for them. It also drew them to Voyageurs National Park, and the society of the people who work and volunteer there. They enjoyed interactions with others who shared their convictions.

### *Sharing Resources*

Sharing resources seemed to highlight the different ways the two main social groups use natural resources and by extension the different types of values held by group members. Participants described the ways their societies divided access to natural resources between their members. They indicated political and legal power rests with the group affiliated with Voyageurs National Park while the local community members must choose to accept current conditions or fight to regain some of the control and access they lost when the park was created. They described communication between members in different social groups taking place in structured situations such as public forums and political legislation. They also talked about meeting people with different beliefs during social events and attempting to share their convictions. Neither forum appeared to be effective ways to encourage listening to others' opinions or finding ways to work cooperatively. Community members could appreciate each other as individuals, but people were reluctant to engage in open, honest communication, probably because one group has more control over the situation than the other. "Sharing" is also relative in this

context, since the social group consisting of local community members perceive that their members were forced to share while those affiliated with the park took what they wanted and shared with visitors from outside the community.

### *Define “Environmental Ethics” and “Stewardship”*

Participants indicated their concepts of stewardship and environmental ethics were strongly influenced by their social relationships, particularly the groups in which they were raised as children, and their personal predilections. Once these baselines were set each participant was drawn to a social group populated by like-minded individuals. Communication on issues surrounding environmental ethics and stewardship generally took place inside the participant’s social group. Members reinforced each others’ concepts and developed nuances through discussion and action. When discussions included members of the other two social groups the participants reported less open communication, resistance to change, and signs of distrust. They described participating in socially sanctioned activities with the land that added value to their lives. They cited personal experiences to support their concepts of environmental ethics and stewardship by linking their perceptions with positive reinforcement from their social groups.

### *Place Value on Wilderness Experiences*

Participant responses indicated the value they placed on their wilderness experiences was based on personal dispositions and social influences. Their narratives about their activities in wilderness settings show how the two forces interacted to create individual behavior. All mentioned supporting their community in context with their support for wilderness because wilderness added value to their neighborhoods. Wilderness in Voyageurs National Park was valued by participants because it allowed

them to develop their personal identities through interactions with wilderness and by sharing their experiences with others. Stewardship of wilderness allowed participants to believe they were adding something valuable to their communities and therefore increased their feelings of self-worth. All described specific actions they felt supported and added to the value they placed on the park.

### Future Research

Several opportunities for future research developed during the course of this dissertation. Groups interested in using and protecting the ecosystems in Voyageurs National Park are often motivated by very different interests. Their conflicting ideologies can create psychological barriers to open, effective communication. Future studies could examine the effectiveness of communication used in public forums, particularly those mandated by the National Park Service and other government agencies to solicit public opinion. Voyageurs National Park also distributes surveys to visitors, soliciting information regarding their recreational activities and experiences. The data is used as a guideline to develop facilities based on projected visitor usage. Future studies could examine the effectiveness of this data collection method, possibly by comparing it to other opportunities for public input.

People recreate in different ways when they visit Voyageurs National Park. Some options include camp sites, private cabins bordering the park, and renting a resort cabin or houseboat. An informative study could be developed to examine what, if any, behavior and attitude changes occur based on the type of connections people establish with Voyageurs National Park. This dissertation indicates visitors to Voyageurs National Park and local community members are moving toward the kinds of recreational uses

supported by the park and away from local, traditional methods of recreation.

Recreational cabins are one example. Grim argued staying at a park camp site can be just as rewarding as staying at a private cabin, but he described cabin owners enjoying activities such as gardening and working on their cabins which would not be allowed in the park. A study on the different types of usage and the ways people describe their experiences could identify important personal connections people create with the park ecosystems.

While this dissertation describes local resistance to information communicated from Voyageurs National Park employees to local community members, an earlier, preliminary study (Klesman, 2009) indicated public stewards such as the Voyageurs National Park staff influence cultural attitude through the information they collect and make available to the public. A broader study could indicate which kinds of communication are the most effective for conveying research information to the public and what social implications might result.

This dissertation found Voyageurs National Park management was closely connected to communication used to generate political and legal decisions related to the park. Relevant studies could be developed based on the historic political battles surrounding the creation and management of the park, particularly since many of the laws were used as benchmarks for similar rulings in other states. There is also the international politics surrounding water regulation between the U.S. and Canada through the International Joint Commission and the International Rainy Lake Board of Control.<sup>47</sup> The four member group holds annual public meetings, can determine when emergency

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<sup>47</sup> More information is available at [http://www.ijc.org/conseil\\_board/rainy\\_lake/rl\\_home\\_accueil.php?language=english](http://www.ijc.org/conseil_board/rainy_lake/rl_home_accueil.php?language=english)

conditions based on water levels exist, and now conducts research to set upper and lower water levels at each lake. Grim said one of his jobs as a board member was to listen to public concerns and complaints so they could be handed quickly. These areas could reveal interesting aspects of government response to local concerns. The Heart of the Continent is another excellent opportunity to study political communication between U.S. and Canadian groups. The organization established a forum where group members can discuss how to manage public lands along the Minnesota/Ontario border.<sup>48</sup> The organization does not take positions or attempt to influence others but wants to sustain and appreciate the health, beauty, diversity, and productivity of the natural and cultural resources in the border lakes region by working together. Any of these projects would provide opportunities to study the impact local and international politics create for environmental issues.

Volunteers are important to Voyageurs National Park and this dissertation revealed some of the reasons people are willing to donate their time to the park. Summer volunteers range from retired couples who work full time at national parks to college students hoping to work for the Park Service after graduation. The National Park Service often gives priority to volunteers who apply for seasonal and permanent employment so volunteer service is an important step in the hiring process. There are also community supporters who volunteer regularly for special or annual events, or who donate their services to particular departments or projects. A relevant study could be developed regarding this process and to examine the different factors that motivate people to volunteer, both in Voyageurs National Park and at other National Parks.

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<sup>48</sup> More information is available at <http://www.heartofthecontinent.org/>

These and other future research projects will benefit the academic community and Voyageurs National Park. Federal legislation protecting wilderness areas like Voyageurs National Park was drafted and passed into law in direct response to public concern. Grass roots movements sprang up across the nation to support the Wilderness Act of 1964, which legally defined wilderness and protected approximately 9 million acres of federal land. Voyageurs National Park history reflects the continuing struggle between private and commercial interests, and local concerns for rapidly disappearing wild places. This discussion will not disappear but it will change as public interest and government priorities alter to meet new social conditions. This dissertation briefly described conflicts between local community members and those affiliated with Voyageurs National Park but the issues are too complicated to cover completely. Further research could benefit future negotiations regarding how this public land could best be managed. The issue is important to the future of the park, the local community, and U.S. citizens who have a stake in this public land. Howard Zahnister from the Wilderness Society first called for public support of legislative action to protect wilderness areas because they are necessary for the public good. He said we need

Areas of the earth within which we stand without our mechanisms that make us immediate masters over our environment – areas of wild nature in which we sense ourselves to be, what in fact I believe we are, dependent members of an interdependent community of living creatures that together derive their existence from the sun. By very definition this wilderness is a need. The idea of wilderness as a area without man's influence is man's own concept. Its values are human

values. Its preservation is a purpose that arises out of man's own sense of his fundamental needs. (Congressional Record, June 1, 1956)

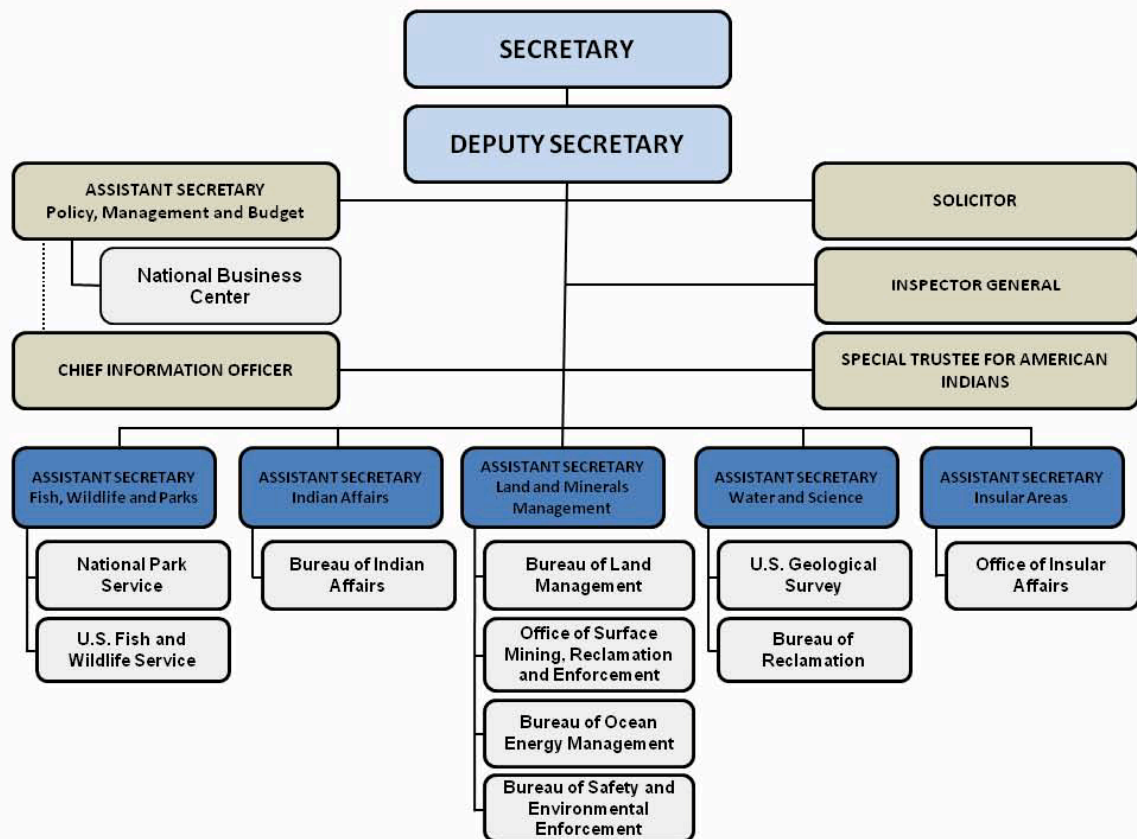
While Zahnister's words resonated with the public when he presented this speech in May 1955, public needs and interests have continued to evolve. Aldo Leopold, (1925) one of the foremost conservationists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, declared wilderness "is the very stuff America is made of" but societies are constantly shifting. This dissertation illustrated the changing dynamic between Voyageurs National Park, the International Falls community, and changing attitudes regarding stewardship of public lands. It illustrates some of the ways people communicate their relationships with the natural environment and how they value their experiences.



## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



This organizational chart for the U.S. Department of the Interior illustrates the relationship between the Deputy Secretary, five Assistant Secretaries, and eight Bureau Directors

## Appendix B

### Legislative Chronology for Voyageurs National Park, 1891-2001

- 1891            The Minnesota State Legislature passed a concurrent resolution requesting that the president of the United States establish a national park between Crane Lake and Lake of the Woods.
- 1899-1908      A campaign for a national park led by the Minnesota Federation of Women's Clubs was begun. Following compromise with competing proposals, the effort resulted in congressional action in 1908 establishing the Minnesota National Forest in north-central Minnesota between Bemidji and Grand Rapids. The name was changed in 1928 to Chippewa National Forest.
- 1909            President Theodore Roosevelt established the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota.
- 1926            The secretary of agriculture issued a policy statement establishing a roadless primitive area within the Superior National forest, thereby recognizing the significance of recreational values in the management of the forest.
- 1927            The Quentico-Superior Council, a conservation coalition dedicated to protection of the natural resources in the Minnesota-Ontario boundary waters area, was formed. Ernest Oberholtzer from northern Minnesota was the council's most active supporter and its first president.
- 1930            The Shipstead-Newton-Noland Act was passed by Congress to conserve for recreational use the natural beauty of shorelines on all federal lands in the boundary waters area. Logging was forbidden on all shores to a depth of 400 feet from the natural waterline. Three years later Minnesota passed similar legislation pertaining to state lands.
- 1933-37        On several occasions during the depression years, the St. Louis County Board wrote to the governor favoring federal purchase of its tax-delinquent lands in the Kabetogama area.
- 1938-39        Working with the state, the NPS conducted a "State Park, Parkway and Recreation Area" study in Minnesota. A report in 1939 included a plan that eventually led to eight new units in the Minnesota State Park system.

The Kabetogama Peninsula (west half) was looked at for its potential as a state park but was not included in the recommended list.

- 1957-58      The NPS was asked by the state to assist in updating the 1939 “State Park, Parkway and Recreation Plan.” The NPS was also asked to evaluate the Northwest Angle area as to its potential as a unit in the National Park System. After study, the Northwest Angle area was not recommended, but the Kabetogama Peninsula did interest NPS personnel.
- 1959-61      NPS personnel carried out reconnaissance surveys of the Kabetogama Peninsula to determine its potential as a national park. The state continued to withhold Kabetogama state lands from sale pending possible state park status.
- Fall 1961      NPS Director Conrad Wirth authorized advanced studies of the Kabetogama area, as recommended by NPS staff.
- 1962          Minnesota Governor Elmer L. Andersen hosted a tour of the Kabetogama area with guests NPS Director Conrad Wirth, State Parks Director U. W. Hella, Minnesota Historical Society Director Russell Fridley, naturalist Sigurd Olson, and George Amidon, the official representing the Minnesota and Ontario Paper Company, the principle landowner on the Kabetogama Peninsula. Governor Andersen wrote a consensus statement for the group recognizing the potential of the area as a unit of the National Park System. Olson suggested the park be named Voyageurs National Park. The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historical Sites, Buildings and Memorials approved a resolution to the secretary of the interior, recommending Voyageurs be added to the National Park System.
- 1963          The NPS completed a report on a proposed Voyageurs National Park extending from Rainy Lake to the mouth of the Vermilion River at Crane Lake. This proposal, which included lands and water under the jurisdiction of the USFS, was an “in-house” document circulating between the NPS and the USFS. The USFS strongly objected to the inclusion of their lands in the proposed park.
- 1964          The first official park proposal was published for public information. It described a park located on the Kabetogama Peninsula and adjacent waters on Rainy Lake and Kabetogama Lake.

- 1965 Voyageurs National Park Association was organized to promote the establishment of a national park on the Kabetogama Peninsula.
- Oct. 1967 A Citizens Committee for Voyageurs National Park was established to generate public support for the park proposal across the state; five thousand signed the park petition at the Minnesota State Fair.
- Nov. 1967 Governor Harold LeVander sponsored a special workshop on Voyageurs National Park in Virginia, Minnesota, where positions on both sides of the park proposal were invited and discussed.
- Dec. 1967 Governor LeVander endorsed the NPS proposal for a national park on the Kabetogama Peninsula and made the case for extending the boundaries southeasterly to include Namakan and Sand Point Lakes.
- 1968 The NPS published a master plan for the proposed Voyageurs National Park on the Kabetogama Peninsula; Minnesota's Eighth District congressman, John Blatnik, joined by the entire state congressional delegation, introduced legislation authorizing a Voyageurs National Park extending from Rainy Lake on the northwest to Crane Lake on the southeast. The Blatnik proposal was quite similar in extent to the original plan completed by the NPS staff in 1963.
- April 1969 Representative John Blatnik reintroduced his Voyageurs National Park bill in the Congress.
- August 1969 The House Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation held field hearings in International Falls, Minnesota, on the Voyageurs National Park legislation.
- July 1970 The House Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation held hearings in Washington, D.C.
- Oct. 1970 The House of Representatives approved Voyageurs National Park legislation.
- Dec. 4, 1970 The Senate Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation held hearings on the Voyageurs National Park bill in Washington, D.C.

- Dec. 22, 1970 The Senate approved Voyageurs National Park bill after adding amendments.
- Dec. 29, 1970 The House agreed with Senate amendments, and the Voyageurs National Park bill was sent to the president for signature.
- Jan. 8, 1971 President Richard M. Nixon signed the bill authorizing Voyageurs National Park.
- May 1971 The Minnesota State Legislature approved donation of state lands for Voyageurs National Park to comply with congressional requirements.
- June 1971 Myrl Brooks was appointed project manager for Voyageurs National Park. Brooks became the first superintendent of the park after its formal establishment.
- April 8, 1975 Voyageurs National Park was formally established as the thirty-sixth national park.
- 1975 In spring, the state legislature approved funding for a Citizens Council on Voyageurs National Park. The Legislation was opposed by the Voyageurs National Park Association.
- 1977 The federal court affirmed park jurisdiction over waters in Voyageurs National Park.
- 1978 The park's first visitor center opened on Highway 53, International Falls.
- 1980 A local resident challenged Voyageurs' land acquisition program. The first master plan and final environmental assessment for the park was completed.
- 1983 Congress deletes 1,000 acres on Black Bay following an appeal by duck hunters. The Cruiser Lake trail on Kabetogama Peninsula was completed.
- 1985 The Locator Lake trail was completed from the south shore of Lake Kabetogama to the peninsula's interior at Locator Lake.
- 1987 Rainy Lake Visitor Center was dedicated. Public meetings were held on a fire management plan and water level issues.

1988	Construction was completed of the Kabetogama Lake visitor center and a new access road to Rainy Lake; rehabilitation of Kettle Falls hotel was completed.
1989	Environmental education programs began.
1990	The United States paid V. Davis \$1.2 million for land
1992	The park designates winter protection areas to protect gray wolves and eagles.
1993	The Little America Island Mine trails and exhibit opened; a gold rush celebration took place.
1994	Friends of Voyageurs National Park was established.
1996	A thirteen-member citizen panel began efforts to resolve problems facing management of Voyageurs National Park. Discussions were refereed by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.
1997	The federal court affirmed the NPS's mandate to manage park wildlife. The Ash River visitor center road was dedicated.
1998	Work on the General Management Visitor Use and Facilities Plan began.
1999	The federal court <i>reaffirmed</i> the NPS's jurisdiction over park waters. The park has constructed 214 campsite/day-use sites, 25 miles of hiking trails, 110 miles of snowmobile trails, and 15 miles of ski trails.
1999	The governor ended state funding for the controversial Citizens Council on Voyageurs National Park.
2000	The twenty-fifth anniversary of Voyageurs National Park was celebrated in August 2000.
Nov. 2001	The new "Voyageurs National Park General Management/Environmental Impact Statement/Visitor Use and Facilities Plan" was completed and became law on November 11, 2001.

## Appendix C

### Interview Questions – Three Interview Process

#### Informed Consent and Release

Greet participant and review the procedure – make audio and video recording of process

- I give my name, date, purpose of interview and location
- I ask participant for name and I review the IRB privacy/participation release

“Part of this research project is to collect oral histories, to be saved as part of the history collections in places like the Koochiching County Historical Museums and the Voyageurs National Park library. This means I’ll make video and audio recordings of our talks and save them as part of the historic archives in these museums. I’ll also have a transcript made and I’ll use this printout to do my research. I’ll look for the words and phrases you use to describe different situations and compare them to those of other participants. These recordings may be used as part of teaching and lecture seminars but will not be broadcast for profit. They will be available to the public as part of the historical record. Do you understand and agree to these terms?”

“We’ll meet three times for an hour to an hour and a half over the course of 9-14 days. This way we each have time to rest in between and think about what we want to talk about next time. You are free to stop the interview at any time for any reason and withdraw from this study. I want to thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed. I believe you have something important to say and I appreciate your willingness to talk to me. Do you have any questions about anything?”

- Ask for signature on release
- Formalities done – begin interview

#### First Interview

Tell me about yourself:

- Where were you born and raised
- Who are your parents and your family – where are they from
- Any siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles or other family you were raised with

Interests growing up

- School
- Hobbies
- Did someone or some event have a strong influence on you

Adulthood

- When you left home where did you go and what did you do
- Did you start a family, find a job or begin a career, go to college
- Where there any events you feel dramatically influenced you as an adult

Now/present

- How do you feel about living in northern Minnesota – the location and the community
- Do you have connections to the community – what kind
- Do you have affiliations with particular groups, family members or friends living here
- Where are you now in your life – working, retired, still living with family

“Anything you feel is important that I might have missed?”

End interview – set date, time and place for next interview

## Second Interview

Preparation

- Give my name, the date, location of the interview and the purpose. Ask participant to state name
- Remind participant this is an oral history recording and it will be saved as part of a historical record

“Last time you told me about your past history in a general way. This time I’d like to hear about your experiences with nature when you were growing up and what you do outside today.”

Timeline/history

- Do you like to be outside – how early in your life do you remember wanting to be outdoors
- Did your parents take you and the rest of the family outdoors – how often?
- What activities did you learn when you were growing up
- [Encourage examples and stories]
- Any special places, people or events you remember

As an adult, what do you like to do outdoors?

- [Be sure the participant discusses the following categories:]
  - Recreation
  - Hunting and/or fishing
  - Collecting materials to make something with
  - Collecting materials for food
  - Collecting something you will ultimately sell (berries, birchbark)
  - Other



Today when you go outdoors, where do you go and what do you do?

- Do you see the environment in your area changing and if so in what ways
  - [Encourage personal stories and examples]
- Do you think these changes are a natural part of the forces of nature or caused by outside influences
  - [Do beaver dams constitute natural forces? Do hydroelectric dams? Both restrict water flow.]

“How do you feel about the outdoors today? Is it important to you and if so in what way? Is there anything else I should know or that you want to add?”

End interview – set date, time and place for next interview

### Third Interview

#### Preparation

- Give my name, the date, location of the interview and the purpose. Ask participant to state name
- Remind participant this is an oral history recording and it will be saved as part of a historical record

“We’ve talked about your personal history and your relationship with the outdoors. Today I want to know how you feel nature should be treated by people and how you developed your ideas.”

Questions to jump-start the discussion:

- “What do natural places mean to you? Where do you go and what do you do while you are outdoors?”
- “Have you heard the word “stewardship” before? In what context? What does the word “stewardship” mean to you in relation to natural places? Have you ever had stewardship of property? Tell me about it.”
- [Defining the term “environmental ethics.”] “We hear a lot about balancing the things people need from nature against protecting and preserving those natural spaces. What does this discussion mean to you?”
- “Do you think it is necessary to protect the natural places? Explain your reasoning. How would you do it?”
- Think about the people you are most likely to see at home, at work and while you are out living your life. How do you think most of these people would respond if they were asked how they feel about the land in their communities and in the nearby areas? How do you think they want the land to be managed?

- How do you feel about sharing responsibility for the Rainy River drainage basin (the area of interconnected waterways) with another country? Another culture? How would you manage things if you were in charge?

Anything you want to add or you feel I missed?

Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions. I appreciate your participation.

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